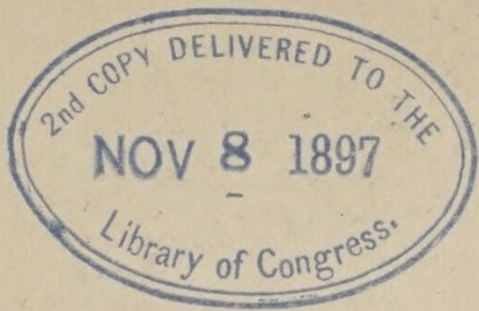


PRINCE  
UNO  
UNCLE FRANK'S  
VISIT TO  
FAIRYLAND





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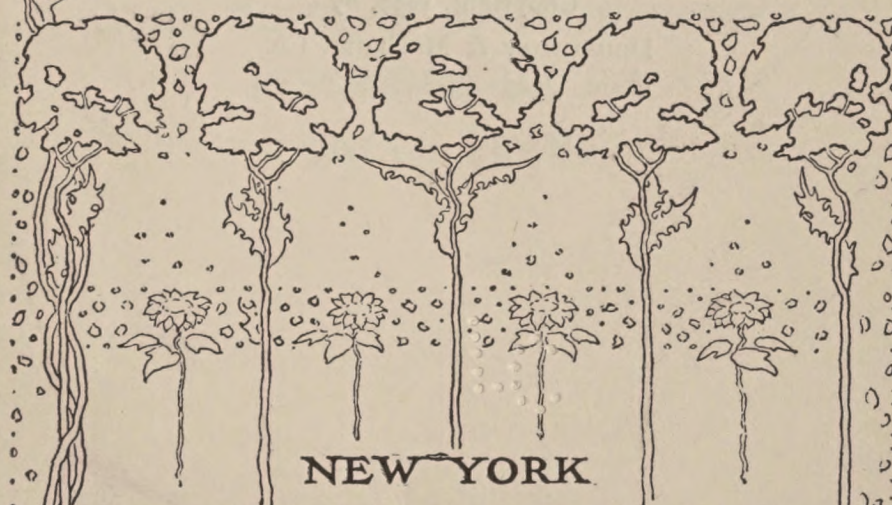


# UNO

UNCLE FRANK'S

VISIT TO  
FAIRY-LAND

ILLUSTRATED BY  
W. D. STEVENS

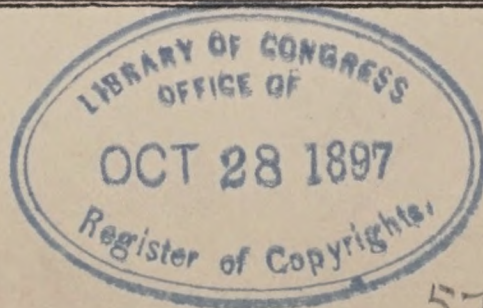


NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY & MCCLURE Co.

1897



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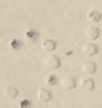
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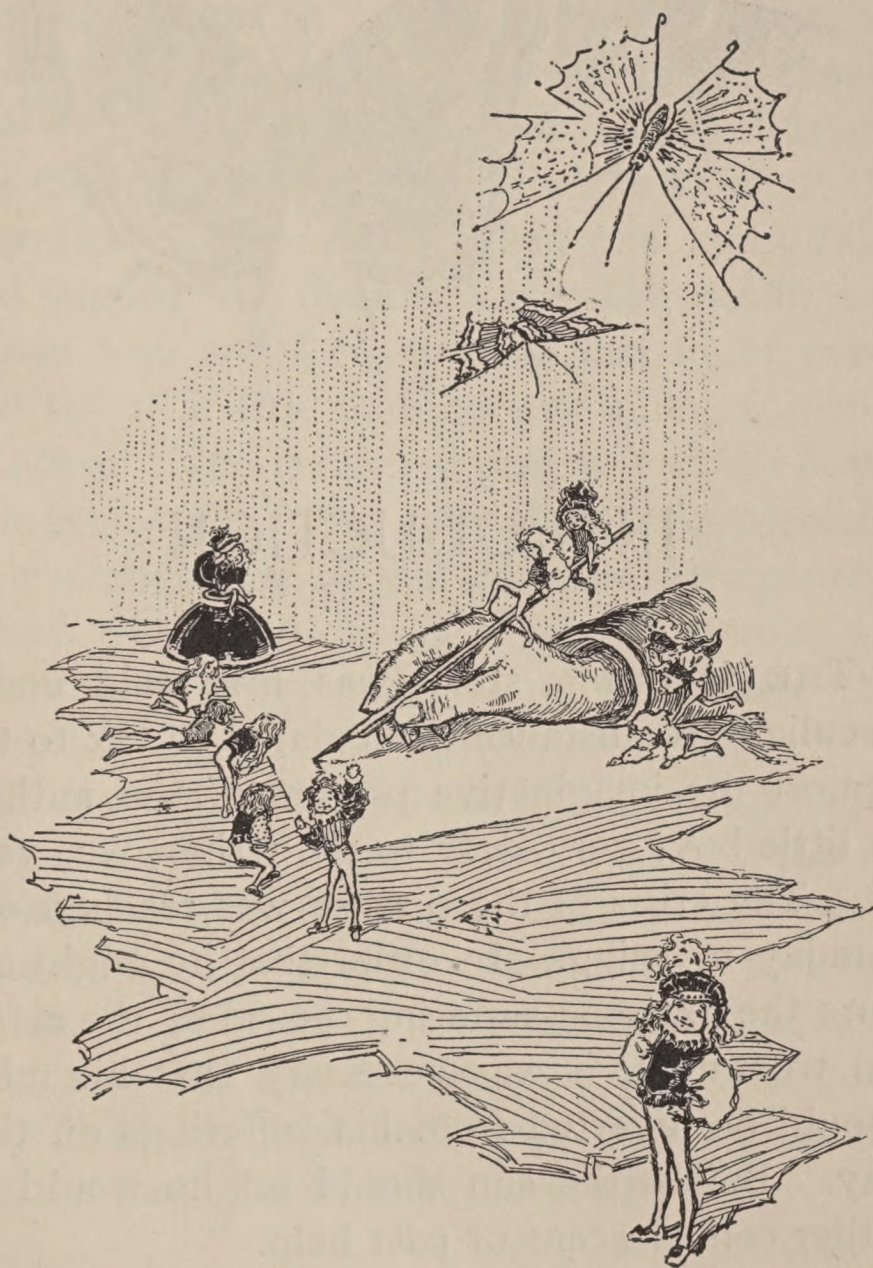
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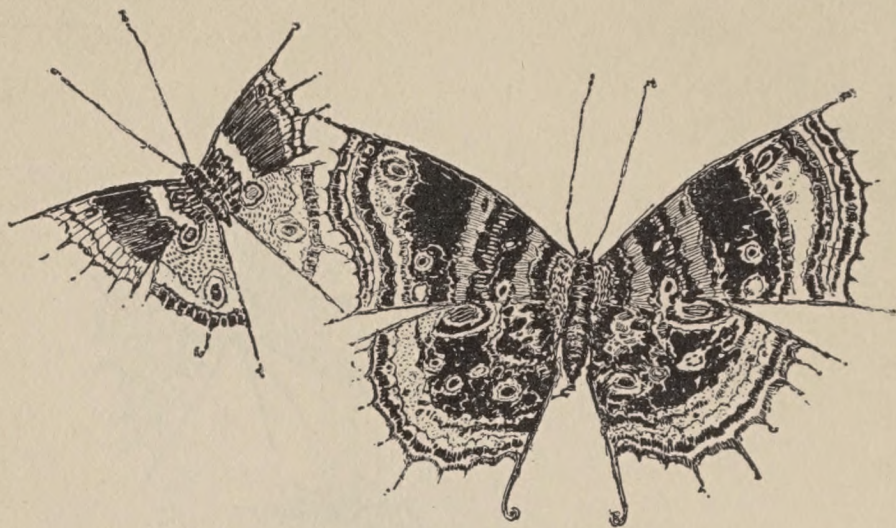


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TO MY LITTLE NEPHEW  
M. H. H.  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY  
INSCRIBED BY HIS  
UNCLE FRANK







## INTRODUCTION

THE following story was first told under peculiar circumstances, calculated to tax to the utmost the imaginative powers of the author. A little boy, very dear to the writer, was very ill. The crisis of the disease was reached one Sunday morning. In order that he might endure the extreme suffering caused by the medical treatment, it was necessary that his mind should be diverted from his sufferings on that day. Before the sun should set he would be either convalescent or past help.

“Uncle Frank,” was the early morning greeting on that fateful day, “please tell me a fairy-story, and make it exciting, for it does hurt so!”

Then and there began the recital of the ro-

mance which follows. It was not difficult, as the story proceeded, to read in the boyish face the expression of interest or weariness. At times the admonition to "make it exciting" further stimulated the powers of the narrator. Breakfast was eaten at the bedside of the sufferer; the dinner-hour was passed in like manner, the narrative proceeding between the mouthfuls; and supper was discussed between conflicts of Kings Vim and Leo, until at last night came, and the sick little auditor was quiet in restful slumber. The crisis had passed, and the battle had been won. The patient was convalescent. Is it strange that to him whose suffering occasioned the telling of it, and whose interest in it encouraged the writing of it, I dedicate this story?

There were older listeners also. They urged its publication. Upon them must rest the responsibility for this book. That it may prove interesting, and possibly comforting, to other little ones in need of entertainment, and that they too, like him for whom it was first told, may find in its pages relief from pain and weariness, is the hope of their sincere friend,

THE AUTHOR.



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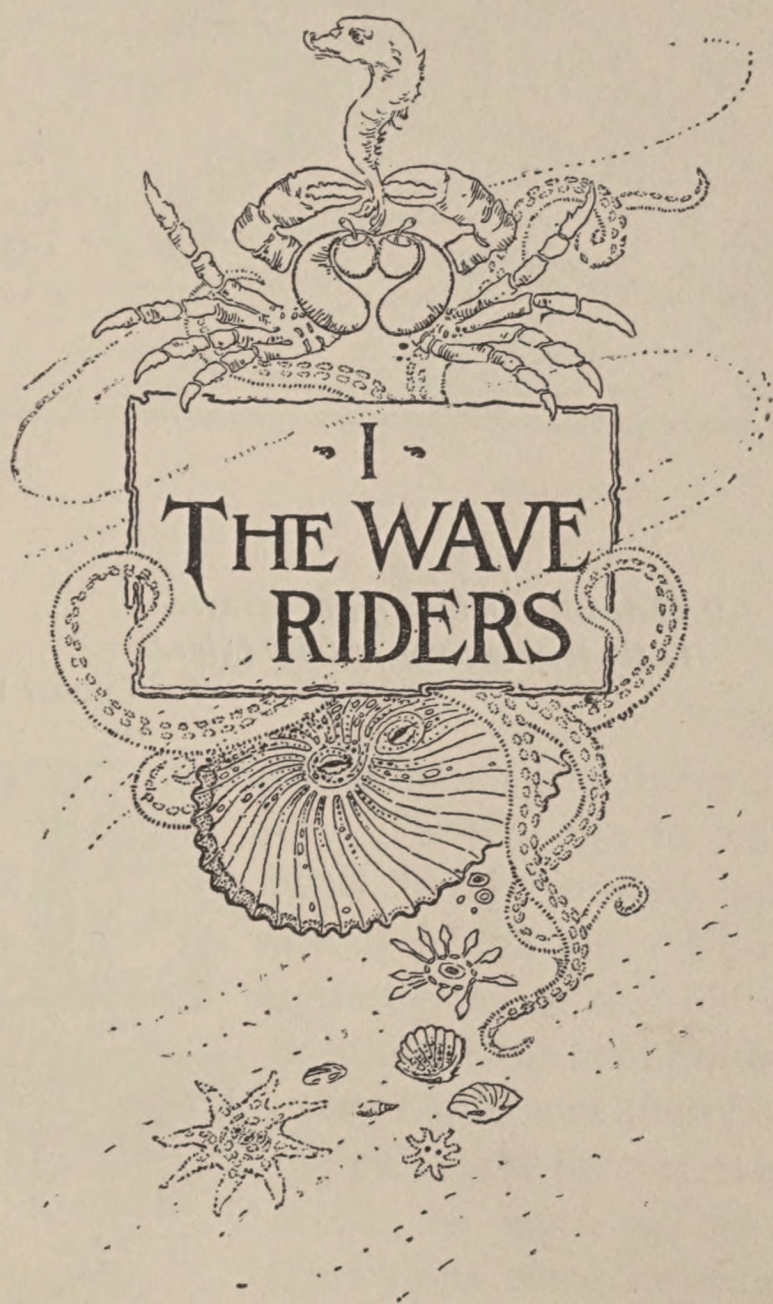
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*“ Their little, minim forms arrayed  
In the tricky pomp of fairy pride.”*

THE CULPRIT FAY.



## I

### THE WAVE RIDERS



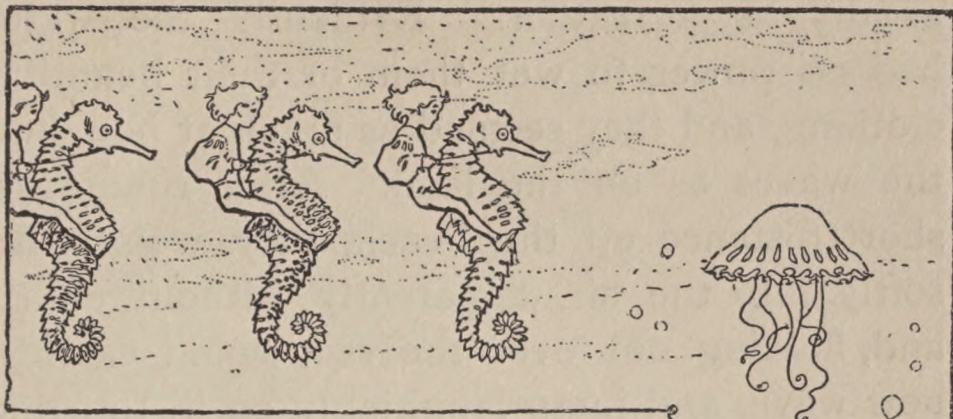
LAST summer I was living by the sea. The cottage in which I dwelt stood half-way up the side of a high hill. Upon the highest point of this hill was a lighthouse, the lamps of which, every night, sent their beautiful, pale light far out over the ocean, to warn sailors that their ships were nearing the land, and that they must avoid the rocks of the shore. Far below was the deep blue sea, which was always, night and day, rolling its waves on a beach of white sand.

I was very fond of walking on the beach, and

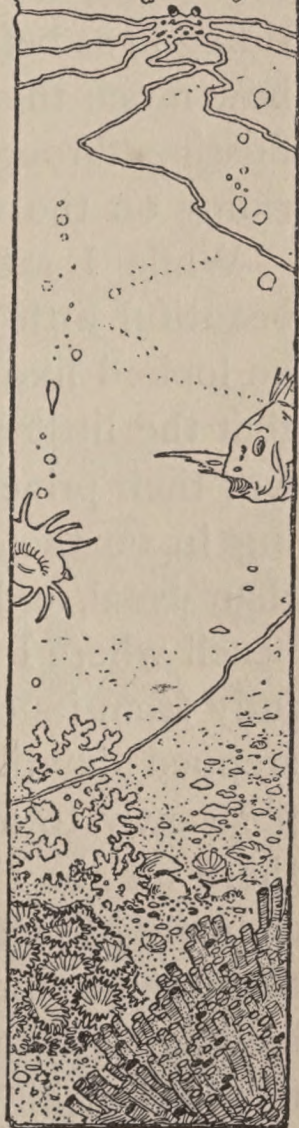
often sat down on the sand, near the water's edge, where I could watch the waves come chasing each other in, like children at play. On the afternoon about which I am going to tell you, I went farther from home than usual, down to a little bay, where the trees grew close to the beach, and where no one seemed ever to come. It was very quiet. The sun was shining brightly on the water and the land, and there was no sound that I could hear, save the soft whispering of the waves as they came running in, one after another, to break into foam on the clear white sand. I sat down to watch them.

While looking at them I thought I could perceive different colors in the foam, and that instead of being always white and frothy, it was sometimes blue, sometimes red, and at other times yellow or green. At last I fancied I could hear a merry sound, as if the waves were actually laughing. At times, too, I thought I heard low, soft music, like the singing of very





small children, far, far away. It was such a pleasant sound that I moved nearer to the waves, so that they came almost to my feet. I then discovered that the sounds I heard were not made by the waves at all, but by numbers of little people. They were dressed in blue and red and yellow and green silks, and had white feathers in their hats, and, some of them, gold sashes over their shoulders. They were riding on the tops of the waves, singing and laughing, as the water came rolling up the sand. What seemed to me very strange was that they were not at all wet, but that as each little fellow came riding in on the top of a wave he ran up on the beach



as dry as a feather. Evidently the water had no power to wet them or their beautiful clothing, and they seemed as much at home on the waves as on the land. After running a short distance up the beach, they would rise softly into the air, apparently without effort, and, floating out over the sea, would catch a new wave, and jump laughingly on it, to come riding in as before. It was very pleasant to see how much they appeared to enjoy the power of floating through the air without wings, and of riding on the waves without getting wet.

While I sat watching them I noticed one beautiful little fellow, who was dressed so fine he looked like a prince. I made up my mind that the little people were fairies, and that he was their prince or king. At last he came riding in on the top of a wave which was larger than usual, and which carried him far up on the beach where I was lying. It landed him gracefully from its crest, quite near my face. As he stepped daintily down to the sand, he nodded pleasantly to me, just as if he knew I had been there all the time, and just as if he had been acquainted with me all his life. As he was turning to run back again, I reached out my hand quickly and caught him. I was careful not to hurt him, and was surprised and pleased to find that he was laughing good-naturedly, was not at all afraid, and evidently was not angry with me for detaining him. Indeed, he



acted as if it were all a playful joke which he understood and enjoyed.

Holding him in my hand, upon which, when I finally opened it, he walked about, I was able to observe him more closely. He was beautifully and richly dressed. The feather in his hat was from the wing of a humming-bird, and was fastened with a diamond, the brightest I had ever seen. He himself was no larger than my finger. He had a merry, handsome face, and long curling hair, which fell over his shoulders in ringlets of gold. He was dressed throughout in yellow satin. Over his shoulder was a small gold chain which held a little trumpet made of pearl. From a belt about his waist, in a bright silver scabbard, hung a small sword. All the buttons of his coat and vest were diamonds, which, whenever he moved, shone brightly.

"Are you afraid?" I inquired of him.

He answered quickly, "No"; and laughingly added, "Why should I be?"

I was charmed with his manners and his courage, and exclaimed, "Why, do you know me?"

He replied, "Certainly; you are Uncle Frank."

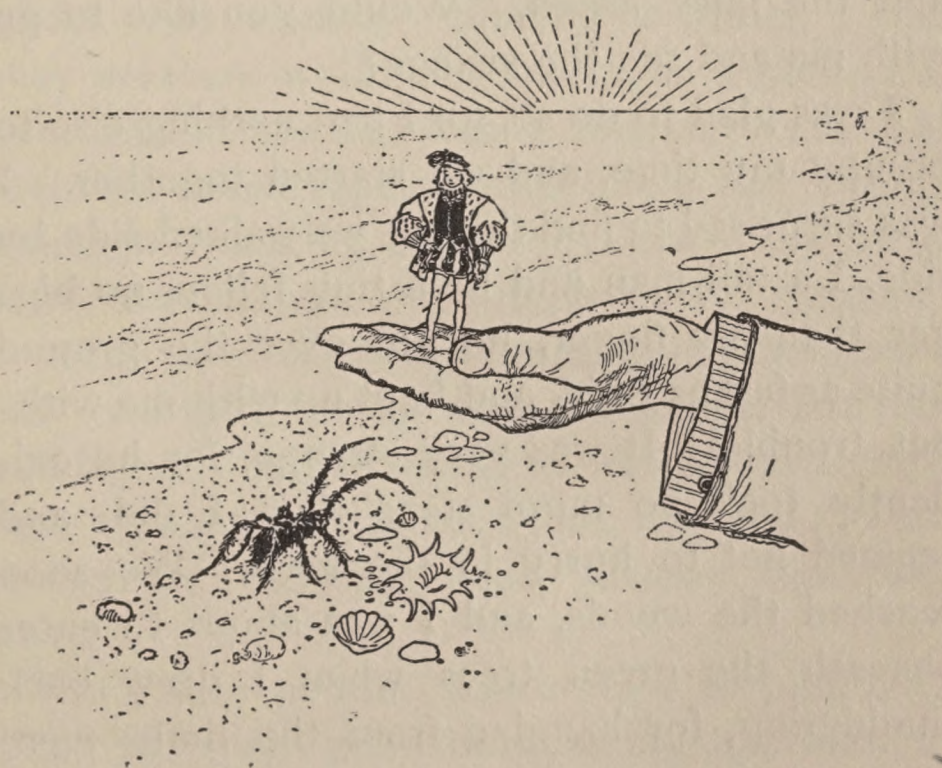
You may be sure this surprised me not a little.

He continued: "I have known you a long time; but if I had never met you before, I should not be afraid of you. You could not injure me if you wished to,"

As he spoke, an ugly-looking spider came running over the sand toward the place where we were talking, and, supposing the Prince would be frightened, I lifted him somewhat higher from the ground, and said, "Don't be afraid; the spider cannot reach you."

He turned his bright little face toward me with such a look of surprise and amusement upon it that I saw I had made a mistake. Then, placing both hands upon his sides, he laughed so long and heartily—such a merry, ringing laugh—that I could not help smiling at his good humor.

"Afraid of a spider!" said he. "Why, don't you know that neither beast nor bird nor fish nor insect could hurt a fairy! I am their king;



they all have to obey me. I am not afraid of a lion. If I ordered him to do so, the great, ugly, roaring fellow would have to carry me about on his back. I am not afraid of an eagle; I have had many a bold ride on an eagle."

By this time the spider had crawled to where we were, and, strange to say, looked as if it wished to speak to the Prince. Sure enough, it did. The Prince nodded smilingly to it. "Well, old Longlegs," said he, "what do you want?"

To my surprise the spider answered:

"Does your Majesty want any swings this afternoon?"

"Yes," said the Prince; "I want—let me see—five hundred, right away."

The spider actually made a bow and turned to go. He was soon out of sight in the woods, and the fairy asked, "Would you like to go with me and see the swings?"

I was glad to do so, for I had nothing else to occupy my time, and we started together. I was surprised to find that, as we walked side by side, I a tall man and he a tiny fellow no bigger than my finger, he got over the ground quite as fast as I did, and kept up with me without trouble. It was very strange, for he evidently took no more steps than I did, and seemed not to hurry in the least. We soon reached the woods, and I was about to enter beneath the green trees when I drew back shuddering, for hanging from the limbs were

hundreds of spiders, some of them great, black, disagreeable-looking fellows.

The Prince, who had been watching me mischievously, quickly perceived my nervousness, and laughed heartily. "Who is afraid of the spiders now?" said he. "Let me pick you up; don't be afraid; they won't hurt you!" He was repeating almost my very words, and seemed to enjoy so much having turned the joke upon me that I could not help smiling at his good nature.

"All joking aside," said he, "you need not be afraid; they are spinning swings for my people, and will soon be through and gone. Then you will see some fun, for my merry men are very fond of swinging."

I now looked again, and could see that each spider was actually spinning a swing. The busy creature would run out upon a limb of a tree, and it seemed but a moment before a beautiful silken rope, formed into a tiny swing, would be hanging from the limb. Ere long there were hundreds of these swings hanging from the trees, of green, blue, and yellow spider-silk. At last, one by one, the spiders left the woods, until all had vanished except old Long-legs, who came up to the Prince and said, "The swings are finished, your Majesty, and we retire."

The Prince nodded approvingly to him, and lifting the small pearl horn to his lips, blew a

clear, ringing note or two, as sweet as a canary-bird's song, most pleasant to hear. It went sounding through the leaves of the trees, out over the sandy beach, and far across the waves. It seemed only a moment before I heard the fairies coming. They came with merry shouts and ringing laughter. Soon each swing held one of them, laughing, and swinging until his little feet kicked the highest leaves of the trees—they swung so high. The Prince seemed pleased to see them enjoy themselves so heartily, and after watching them a moment, turned to me and said, "Do you not think us a good-natured, happy people, Uncle Frank?"

I replied that I certainly did, and ventured to ask him where they all lived.

"That would be telling," said he. "We have a beautiful city not far from here, but no mortal man ever walked through its streets. I have half a mind, however, to take you to see it, and may yet do so if you will promise—hold up your right hand!" (he said this very seriously)—"solemnly and faithfully never to tell where it is."

I was very eager to visit his city; so desirous, indeed, that I was not long in promising. The Prince reached out his hand to a cobweb bell-rope, which hung, with its white tassel, out of a cedar-tree near by, and gave it three gentle pulls. In a moment I heard the distant tinkling of a silver bell, and almost instantly there ap-

peared before us a fairy servant. He was dressed something like waiters I had seen in hotels, with a long white apron and small white cap, and a bunch of tiny gold keys suspended from his waist. He lifted his hat respectfully to the Prince, and awaited his orders.

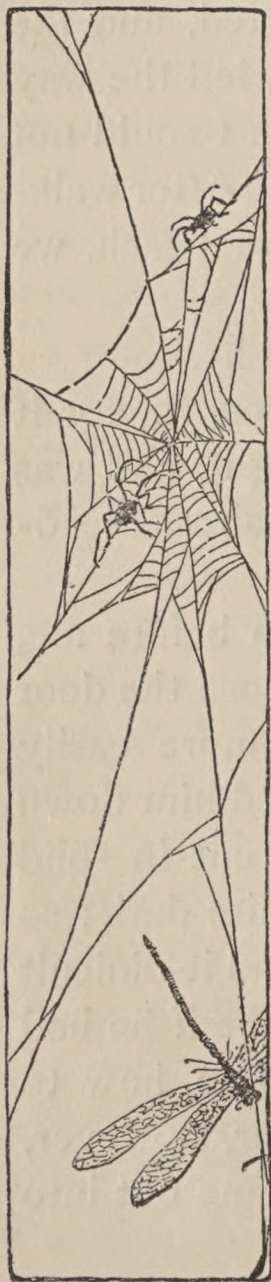
"Pepin," said the fairy, "unlock the door to the large staircase in the cave."

In a moment the servant departed, and the Prince, beckoning to me to follow, led the way through the woods to a place which I could not remember having ever before seen. After walking quickly across the sand of the beach, we came to a large stone.

"You must lift that stone," said he.

I stooped, and using all my strength, for it was quite large, succeeded in lifting it, and was surprised to find below it a small staircase leading down under the sand.

The Prince stepped boldly down before me, and told me to follow him, and to close the door after me. I obeyed. It closed more easily than it had opened. I soon followed him down the steps. The passageway was cut in solid rock. For some distance it was quite dark; so dark, in fact, that I would have found it difficult to tell the whereabouts of the Prince if he had not instructed me, from time to time, how to proceed. The passage grew lighter, however, as we descended, and at last we came out into open daylight.



It was a strange but beautiful country which I now beheld, unlike any I had ever before seen. A short distance in front of us was a beautiful city. The streets were paved with a sort of pink stone. The small houses were of pearl and marble. Many of the tallest of them were four and five stories in height, and perfect in every respect. As I walked past them I noticed that their roofs and chimneys came no higher than to my waist. Everything, in fact, was wonderfully small. The tallest trees, for instance, reached no higher than to my vest pockets. The streets were crowded with little people and with numberless small carriages. The horses were of different colors, black,



brown, and white, and very handsome and spirited, but not larger than rats. The streets were very narrow; so narrow, in fact, that two men as large as myself could not have walked *à* st on the little sidewalks. I had to step carefully in consequence.

I observed that, while there were *ny* houses, there were no stores, and I spoke of this to the Prince. He said fairies had no stores, and required only houses in which to live, but that if I would like to visit some little people who were not fairies, who, though as small as himself, were real people like myself, and who lived in another city not far away, under his protection, he would take me there some day and I should see stores enough. "These carriages and horses which you see," he added, "do not belong to the fairies. We have no use for horses. They belong to the little people of whom I speak. Some of them drive over from their city every day."

By this time we were in front of a beautiful house, very much larger than the others, built entirely of pearl, and with wide steps of agate and carnelian stone leading up to the door. On each side of the steps was a golden lamp-post. I was not long in deciding that this was the palace of the Prince himself, for he ran gracefully up the steps, and invited me to follow. As the house came no higher than to my vest pockets, and as I should certainly have broken

down the steps if I had placed one of my great feet upon them, I naturally hesitated. Observing my hesitation, he turned to me and said, "Will you not come in and take dinner with me?" I replied that I would be very glad to do so, but that he had evidently forgotten either that his house was so small or that I was so large. He laughed heartily. "Why, sure enough!" he exclaimed. "Here I have been talking and gossiping until I forgot all about your immense size—but I will soon fix that." He took from his pocket a small glass bottle. "Take a drink of that," said he. I reached out my great hand, and taking the tiny bottle from him as he stood at the top of the steps, placed it to my lips. It was a mere drop, but what an effect it had upon me! In an instant I felt myself growing smaller. My head commenced going down toward my feet, as if I had been a great spy-glass shutting up. My arms grew shorter, my hands smaller. In less time than it takes me to write it I was as small as the Prince himself. He took a step backward and looked at me approvingly. "I think I am a little the taller of the two," said he, laughingly. "That was a big swallow you took."

It was all very funny, but I began to get frightened. It would be no joke, thought I, if I were always to stay as small as this. He, however, only laughed at my discomfiture and at my little pale face, and said: "Don't be afraid;

I can as easily change you back again. Come with me and look at yourself in the mirror. When you have had dinner I will make you as big and clumsy and homely and awkward as you were a minute ago. You might as well be happy for the short time you are to be good-looking!"

He said this so merrily that it quite reassured me, and I was soon laughing. Finding that I could not help myself, and that I was now small enough to go up the steps and into the palace, which, to tell the truth, I was very eager to see, I was



soon by his side, and, arm in arm, we entered the door together. The Prince laughed again when I stooped on entering the doorway, which was now much higher than my head. Certainly he had some excuse for doing so. "I have always observed," said he, dryly, "that geese stoop when entering a door, no matter how high it may be."

We went into the hall. In it were little servants in livery, who took our hats as the Prince led the way to the parlor. I had time to observe, in passing, that the hall floor was inlaid with small blocks of different-colored stone, and that a beautiful staircase leading to the upper floor was of silver with golden balustrades. The stair carpet was a broad velvet ribbon of a deep crimson. As the Prince seemed to be immensely rich, and to think very little of expense, I could not doubt that the silver was real silver and the gold real gold.

The parlor was quite a large room—I should say fully three feet long by two feet wide. It was, as I could see at a glance, very richly furnished. The carpet of bright colors which covered the floor was soft and pleasant to walk upon. The sofas and chairs were upholstered in red and yellow satin. The walls were covered with beautiful paintings in gold frames, except at each end of the room, where a large mirror reached from the ceiling to the floor.

In one of these mirrors I caught sight of my-

self. There I was, no taller, certainly, than a man's finger, my head no bigger than a cherry, and with such a wee, round, fairy-like face that I laughed again and again at my little self. The Prince, who stood by my side, and who had evidently been slyly waiting to observe my astonishment, was actually the taller of the two by a full half-head!

I felt for my watch to see what time it was, and discovered that it, too, like myself, had grown smaller. It was, in fact, no larger than a shirt-button, and yet in every respect as perfect as before, and was actually keeping time and ticking away as though nothing had happened to it. I could not believe my eyes, and opened the back of it to see if the wheels were actually moving. I found them all running as though they had never been any larger. I returned the watch to my pocket, and soon found that everything else in my pockets had changed like the watch. My knife was a most interesting little affair, the blades as sharp as a razor and as bright as a sixpence. My keys were all of them so small that they would not have unlocked my portfolio at home. My pocket-book was only about half the size of a postage-stamp, and the money in it was so small that I do not believe I could have bought a penny's worth of candy with the whole of it. To say that I was astonished would be to say very little, and yet I was now really more

amused than either surprised or frightened. The Prince was so good-natured that I could not doubt that I should have a good time, and that he would change me back again whenever I should ask him to.

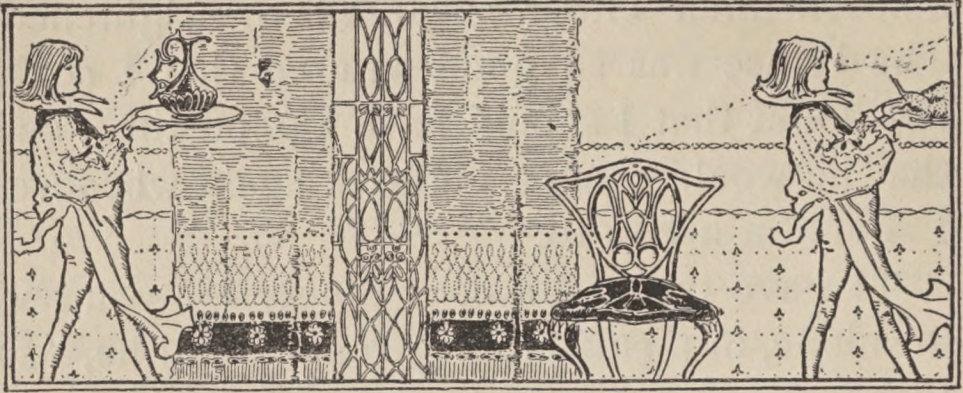
"I have ordered a cozy dinner for you and me alone, in a small dining-room," said he, "so that we may not have to meet my entire court in the large room."

This suited me exactly, and when, a few minutes later, a servant announced that dinner was ready, the Prince invited me to follow him into a very pleasant room, just off the parlor, in which was a table well filled with beautiful dishes and inviting food. A hasty glance convinced me that the dishes, knives, forks, and spoons were all of gold and silver, and the immense wealth of the Prince left me no room to doubt that they were solid.

We took our seats, and several waiters, no larger than ourselves, commenced to bustle about and hand us the food. Everything was delicious. Indeed, I had never eaten any dinner so well cooked. The chickens were no larger than honey-bees, snipe no bigger than mosquitos, oranges and apples about the size of huckleberries, bananas smaller than date-seeds, and everything else in proportion.

"Well," said the Prince at last, "how does the dinner suit you?"

I replied that everything was delicious, but



that I was very hungry and could not get enough. To my astonishment the Prince, upon hearing this, laughed so loud and long that I was at a loss to understand what there could be in my answer which caused him so much amusement. I could see that he was laughing at me, and I could not help feeling somewhat uncomfortable. "What are you laughing at?" I inquired.

He looked at me without answering, and placing both hands to his sides, rose from his chair, and fairly bent over with merriment, growing so red in the face with laughing and coughing that I slapped him on the back to prevent his choking. He would no sooner recover from one attack, and take a look at my astonished face, than he would have another attack. Indeed, he seemed so convulsed with enjoyment of his joke, whatever it was, that at last I could not help laughing myself, although I knew that he was laughing at me, and that he was not treating me as politely or considerately as a guest should be treated.



“What in the name of sense are you laughing at?” I demanded again.

“Why,” said he, “just to think! *I forgot to change your appetite!* Here you are a little scrap of a fellow three inches long with a great six-foot appetite!” And he held his sides and laughed again, until I think every one in the palace, and the town itself, must have heard him.

“Why,” he continued, “just think of it! It is a wonder you did not devour your little self. I would not carry about with me such an appetite as that of yours for a fortune. However, I will soon fix that”; and drawing a small box from his pocket, he took out of it a powder, and told me to take it in a little water. I did so, and soon felt that my appetite, like my body, was growing smaller.

We now sat down again to the table, and my dinner began to satisfy me. I found that I would be able to get a very good meal.

After the table had been cleared, nuts and raisins were brought in. While eating them, the conversation turned upon the city and its people.

"I cannot understand, my dear Prince, why it was that when we walked through the town the people did not seem at all surprised to see me."

"Those from Weeboro did not see you," said the Prince—this, he explained, was the name of the city where lived the people who owned the horses and carriages I had seen—"and the fairies themselves," he continued, "would not be surprised because they saw you in my company. You would be invisible to the people from Weeboro."

"Do you mean to say," I exclaimed, "that I was entirely invisible, and could not be seen by them at all?"

"That 's what invisible usually means, is n't it?" answered the Prince, mischievously.

"Yes," I replied, somewhat nettled at his sharpness, and provoked at my own stupidity. "But what made me invisible to them?"

"I did," said he. "You must remember they are not fairies like us, but real people like yourself. They would have been frightened enough if they had seen you, but I have the power of making myself and others invisible, and I exercised that power in your case."

"But," I inquired, "am I invisible now?"

"No, not now; they could see you now, but would think you a fairy like myself; the fairies alone would know the difference."

"Well," I answered, "it is certainly all very

strange. You must excuse me for asking so many questions. You said that you had no stores in the town because you did not need them; will you please explain why?"

"Because we fairies do not have to buy anything; we have everything we need simply by wishing for it. When you visit the city of Weeboro you will see stores enough, I promise you, for they have stores and mills and horses and carriages and steamboats and railroads, just like larger people."

I became more and more interested, and longed to see these little people and their city, and determined to visit them, if the Prince would only show me the way.

"May I ask a very impolite question, my dear little Prince?"

"Certainly," he replied; "but permit me to remind you that I am half a head taller than yourself, and am somewhat sensitive about being called little by such a short fellow."

I begged his pardon with the same good nature with which he had taken me to task, and continued: "Well, most mighty potentate, I have taken dinner with you and have enjoyed it very much,"—he nodded pleasantly,—“and I would like to know the name of a host who has shown me such kindness. May I ask your name?"

He looked at me intently for a moment, and answered, "Uno."



“Why, no; I don’t know,” I replied, astonished at his answer. “I am sure I never heard your name in my life!”

He laughed heartily. “My name is Uno—Prince Uno—U-n-o; don’t that spell Uno?”

“Ah!” I exclaimed, “that is a very pretty name. Now, may I inquire if you are married?”

“Yes,” said he; “and as we have

disposed of the dinner I will conduct you to the parlor where we shall find the Princess and our children. They will be very glad to meet you.”

We accordingly left the table, he leading the way, and entered the parlor. A very handsome little woman, with large dark eyes and bright golden hair,—a contrast which gave her a very striking appearance,—rose to receive me. There were other people in the room, but the Princess herself was so beautiful, graceful, and pleasant

to look upon that I saw only her. I bowed very low.

"My dear Princess," said Uno, "let me present to you our old friend, Uncle Frank."

She came forward, and, in the most charming and friendly manner, held out both hands to me.

I bent my head respectfully and pressed her hands to my lips.

"I am very glad to see you here in our home, Uncle Frank," she was pleased to say. "It is not the first time I have met you, however, for I assure you I am very well acquainted with you. Let me show you our children"; and she tripped gracefully across the parlor to bring two little children who had been looking out of the window.

"May I ask the name of the Princess?" I inquired of the Prince.

"Certainly," he replied; "Ino."

"Of course you do," said I; "but have you any objection to telling me?"

"None whatever," and he laughed heartily. "What makes you so stupid this evening, my dear Uncle Frank; her name is Ino—I-n-o; don't that spell Ino?"

I could not but admit that it did, and when the lovely Ino returned with her children we were both of us in rare good humor over my mistake.

I thought I had never before seen anything half so cunning as the two diminutive creatures

who now stood before me. One was a bright boy with curly hair and laughing eyes; the other a beautiful girl, the perfect image of her handsome mother. The boy was the taller of the two, yet he was certainly not more than one inch high. To my delight, they did not seem at all afraid of me. They answered all my questions in a modest and intelligent manner. It was pleasant to observe that they were not at all pert or forward. In this respect they were models of behavior for some larger children of my acquaintance, who, when called up before company, seem to think that the opportunity is one for attempting to appear "smart."

"May I ask, dear Princess, where you ever met me before?"

"Certainly," she replied. "I have seen you many times and in many places. The Prince and I generally travel together, and we go far and wide, I assure you. We have been in your own house many times."

I was surprised at this, but it was, after all, no more wonderful than everything connected with these little people. The Princess requested me to be seated, and as we took chairs, the children were permitted to run back to the window. I was disposed to make many inquiries, especially as all my questions were so pleasantly answered, either by the Prince or by his wife, who was particularly witty and agreeable. Although there were other people in the room,

as I have before stated, I was not introduced to them. They seemed to be chatting pleasantly at the other end of the parlor, and were, I believe, playing some game, so that we were in a measure alone at our end of the room.

The city of Weeboro was especially interesting to me, and I learned much about it from the Prince and his wife. To be entertained by such small fairies was certainly extraordinary,—every one, however, knows that fairies are small,—but to see and talk with real people like one's self, who are no larger than one's finger, and yet have real houses and real horses and real steamboats, in every respect as perfect as the largest in the world, was to me most wonderful. I determined to see this city of Weeboro and to hold the Prince to his promise to show it to me.

"It must be pleasant," I remarked to the



Prince, "to live so happily as do your people, who have everything they need to eat and wear simply by wishing for it, and have nothing to do but to enjoy themselves."

"There you are mistaken," said he. "We are happy enough, you may be sure; but we have enough to do, and I think that is the very reason that we are happy. Our work consists in doing good to others, and I have always observed that people are happiest who follow that occupation."

"You surprise me. I supposed you had only to enjoy yourselves," said I. "May I inquire what such little people can find to do?"

"Much — very much," he replied. "It would be a long story to tell you all of our duties, but I will describe a few of them. There are many kinds of fairies, who have each their work to do. There are the 'Sleep Fairies,'



whose duty it is to help in nursing sick children. They wear shoes of the softest down, in order that their footsteps may not be heard in the sick-room. They always carry fans and delightful perfumes, and many a sick child finds his forehead cooled, he knows not how, and falls gently to sleep, forgetting pain and fever, never dreaming that the kind and gentle Sleep Fairies have been by his bedside all night. In the morning parents and physician find him better, but no one understands why. None saw the gentle fairies touching the weary eyelids and cooling the feverish and aching head through the long hours of the night."

It was delightful to hear him.

"And then," he continued, "there are the 'Flower Fairies.' Oh, what a homely world this would be if it were not for the flowers! Often a beautiful but helpless flower will be deprived of its refreshing dew by some great, rough, overbearing tree or selfish bush. But the fairies look to that! When the sun goes down they are at work, and many a tiny cupful of dew is carried to a flower upon which it could never fall. In the morning the beautiful flower is refreshed and bright with new strength to meet the sunbeams; and only the flower and the fairies know the reason why. But I would tire you telling you all that we do," said he. "Some night I will take you with me."

I accepted his invitation with thanks, and

promised to be ready any night he should appoint.

"Are these little ones your only children?" I inquired.

To my alarm the Princess turned pale and seemed about to faint; and the Prince himself, for all that he hurried to her side and seemed anxious only on her account, looked much distressed. That I had asked an unfortunate question was very evident, and words could not express how greatly I regretted it.

The Princess soon recovered, however, and after a moment the Prince said sadly: "Is it possible you have never heard how we lost our brave boy? But I forget; of course you have not. At some other time I may be able to tell you, but not now."

I hastened to change what seemed so painful a subject, but the recollection of the suffering my thoughtless question had caused these charming people made me curious to know the sad story about which I could not ask. "How strange," I thought, "that grief and trouble should find their way here! Even this delightful couple, in their splendid palace and with all their power, are not entirely happy! What can be the sad story of the bright fairy boy they seem to love so much, but who is not here? Of course he cannot be dead." A suspicion of the truth flitted across my mind. He must have been stolen from them. But who could



steal a fairy's child? Would it be possible to do such a thing? I determined, as soon as I had made other acquaintances in Fairyland, to learn this secret; and if I could only help to restore the little one to his parents, how gladly would I serve this charming pair whom I had known less than a single day and had learned to love so dearly!

The Prince and the lovely Princess gradually recovered their gaiety, in appearance at least. They did all they could to make my evening a pleasant

one. So successful were they in this that when at last I looked at my watch it was nearly eleven o'clock, and long past my usual hour for retiring.

Rising, I said, "I must bid you good evening,

and must trouble your Majesty to show me the way home."

I had turned to take leave of my beautiful hostess, when she said: "You cannot go home to-night, Uncle Frank. You must stay with us."

I thanked her, but insisted that I must go.

"It is out of the question," said the Prince, smiling. "You must stay with us. I am unable to let you go, and, seriously, I cannot show you the way to-night, for reasons which I may not explain."

He was evidently in earnest, and meant every word he said, although he smiled pleasantly all the time. This diminutive, charming fellow, I had long since learned, was possessed of a will of his own and was every inch a king. That was hardly doing him full justice, however, for he was certainly not over three inches tall.

"We can make you very comfortable," said the Princess, pleasantly. "If you only knew Uno half as well as I do, you would quietly submit, being convinced that going home to-night is out of the question."


What was I to do? I had left home with the expectation of returning by supper-time. Now it was already nearly midnight, and I was without means of sending word to my house. I realized that I could not help myself. I was now so small that I should have been afraid to go home alone, unless the Prince should consent to change me back to my natural size. Even

if changed, I knew that I could not find the way without a guide. I did not even know in what direction lay the mysterious passage through which, that afternoon, I had entered Fairyland with the Prince. There was clearly no help for it.

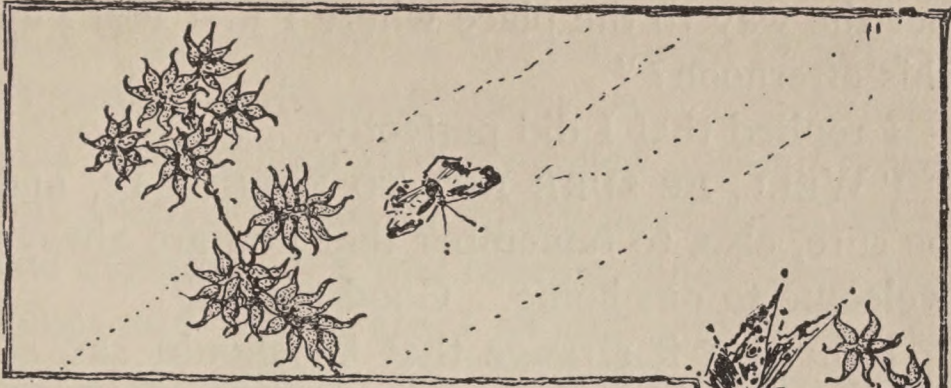
I determined, however, to try persuasion, and accordingly said to the Prince: "My dear Prince, I beg of you, as a special favor, let me return home to-night. I really cannot stay all night. If you will let me off this time, I will come again,—to-morrow, any day you wish,—prepared to stay as long as you desire. Indeed, if my visit will be agreeable to yourself and your charming wife, I shall be glad to return, for I could spend months with you pleasantly enough; but to-night I must go home."

He smiled, but answered firmly: "My dear Uncle Frank, I cannot—let—you—go—home—to-night. Do not give yourself any uneasiness. *You will understand all in the morning.* I am really sorry that I cannot explain, but I may say this: NO MORTAL EVER GETS OUT OF FAIRYLAND BY BEING SHOWN THE WAY."

It all seemed very strange. His whole manner showed plainly that he would like to tell me more if he could. At last, convinced that somehow all would be right, and realizing that I could not help myself, I determined philosophically to make the best of the situation and to accept their invitation to remain.



Both the Prince and his wife seemed inexpressibly pleased and relieved at my change of mind. The Princess said laughingly and mischievously: "You will not regret your decision to remain with us, believe me. We cannot help it. I am a good housekeeper, and can give you a pleasant room, and as comfortable a bed as every one slept upon."



She then requested the Prince to conduct me to my room. After bidding her good night, and pressing a kiss upon her exquisite little hand, I turned to follow Uno, who was already waiting for me on the stairs. He led the way into a pleasant front room on the second floor. It was splendidly furnished, with a soft carpet, a handsome bureau with a fine large mirror, an elegant bedstead of rosewood inlaid with gold, and with satin curtains. The Prince lighted a golden chandelier which hung from the center of the ceiling, and, turning to me, held out his hand.

"I must now bid you good night," said he. "Do not worry, my dear fellow; all will be as you desire. Do you remem-



ber the way to the place where I first met you this afternoon?"

I replied that I did perfectly.

"WELL, BE SURE NOT TO FORGET IT, and be sure, also, to remember that you are always welcome to our home. Good night."

I thought it strange that he should say all this. It seemed to me unnecessary, and that it would have been so much more appropriate in the morning, when I should be leaving for home. "However," thought I, "everything is strange here."

I could not retire until I had examined the room and its contents. Everything was interesting. I found the little bureau perfect in every respect. It had a marble top, and small drawers with good locks and keys, and yet the whole bureau itself was not larger than the square glass inkstand on my desk at home. At one end of the room was a marble wash-stand with silver faucets and hot and cold water. A little pink cake of perfumed soap, not larger than an apple-seed, was to me a great curiosity. I was tempted to put it in my pocket to take home with me, but I thought that it would not be polite for a guest to carry off the soap with him. I was about to retire when I was interrupted by a knock on the door. The Prince himself had returned to inquire if there was anything I needed, and to show me the bell-pull, a little silken cord with a gold tassel at the

end of it, to which he had forgotten to call my attention. I thanked him for his thoughtfulness, and assured him that I needed nothing more, but asked if he would kindly have me called in the morning, as I was retiring much later than usual and was afraid I should oversleep. To my great surprise he laughed heartily at my request, but, observing my astonishment, checked himself immediately, and said, with a mischievous look which I could not at the time understand: "Never fear; you will be called at the proper time." Again bidding me good night, he bowed very low and gracefully—not so low, however, as to prevent my observing a roguish smile upon his face, which I remembered the next day.

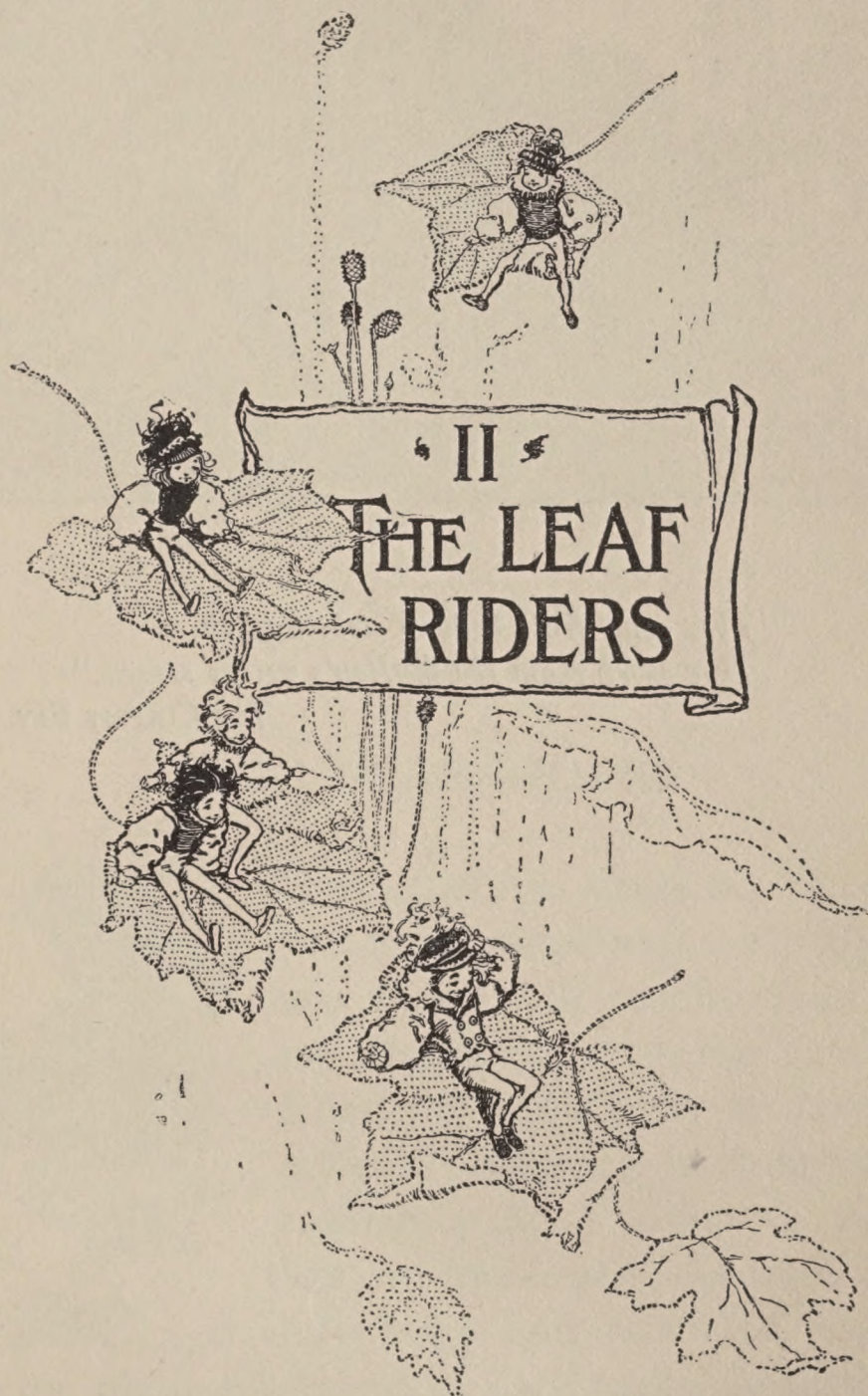
I was soon in bed, but what a bed it was! Never had I stretched my weary limbs on one so comfortable. The softness of its linen was soothing and refreshing. In a moment I was asleep. I slept long and soundly. When I awoke the sun was shining in at the window. It was certainly very late, and, after all, I had overslept. I rubbed my eyes, recalled all the wonderful things I had seen, and sprang out of bed.



I was in my own room at home. I looked for the fairy bureau, the beautiful bedstead, the bright carpet. All were gone. I was standing in front of the mirror of my own bureau, and I looked quickly to see how small I would appear in my own glass. To my surprise I found that I was as large as I had ever been. How strange! Had it all been a dream? I felt sure it had not. How distinctly I remembered everything, from the moment I saw the fairies riding the waves to the very last words the Prince had spoken to me before going to bed: "YOU WILL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN THE MORNING," and "NO MORTAL EVER GETS OUT OF FAIRYLAND BY BEING SHOWN THE WAY."

I began to suspect the truth. While asleep, I had been carried by the fairies to my own room. But how could they carry so large a man as I? The explanation was simple when I remembered how small I had been the night before. They had moved me while I was small, and had not changed me to my real size until I was safe and snug in my own bed.

It was all apparent now. The Prince did not wish me to learn the way out of Fairyland, and had moved me in my sleep.



II

# THE LEAF RIDERS

*"They come from beds of lichen green,  
They creep from the mullen's velvet screen."*

THE CULPRIT FAY.



## II

### THE LEAF RIDERS



PROCEEDED to dress myself. I was quite perplexed. My mind was filled with recollections of my experience of the day before. I had not sufficiently recovered my self-possession to escape the feeling, a most ludicrous one, that my hands and feet were unduly large and awkward, especially when employed in such tasks as putting on my shoes and buttoning my collar. Indeed, in this latter task it was almost impossible to resist the impression that my hands and face,

and, indeed, my whole body, were swollen to an unnatural and clumsy size. Under the influences of a good breakfast and a refreshing cup of coffee, however, I soon recovered my normal mental condition.

Upon retiring to my room after breakfast, I was still further surprised to discover that my night-key to the front door was not in the pocket of my trousers, as usual, but that it had been in my bureau drawer all the time. How, then, could the fairies have entered the house? It was very strange—all very strange.

I remembered the little Princess had said to me that she had been in my house many times. How had she entered? It was plain the fairies had no need of keys, and they must have brought me into the house in some other way than through the door, possibly through the window. It was open, and suggested the idea.

I was very eager to make another trip to Fairyland, and, after reading my newspaper, I determined to set out for the little bay by the sea where I had first met the Prince.

There were no fairies to be seen. I walked across the beach down to the very edge of the water; so near, in fact, that I had hard work, once or twice, to escape a good wetting by the waves, which were higher than usual at that hour in the morning. Notwithstanding I strained both eye and ear to catch sight or sound of my little friends, there was no evidence

whatever of their presence, and after waiting several hours I returned to my home quite disappointed.

The next day, and the day after that, and every day of the bright and beautiful summer, I went regularly to the seaside, but could learn nothing more. Could it be that the fairies wished to avoid me, and had no desire to continue their acquaintance with me? I felt certain that it could not be so. Somehow I felt sure that the Prince was fond of my company. Could it be that I had missed the way to the little bay and had gone to the wrong place? How was I to find out?

I was always thinking of the dear little boy who was lost, and always looking for him through the woods, over the hill, by the sea, everywhere, but I could learn nothing of him.

One afternoon, when the autumn had begun and the leaves were falling from the trees, I had wandered farther from home than usual and some distance into the woods. At last, being



somewhat tired, I sat down to rest upon the projecting root of a large tree, and had been seated but a few minutes when a sturdy boy passed me, pushing before him a large wheelbarrow containing a bagful of dried leaves.

I stopped him to inquire for what purpose he was collecting them, and was informed that he was storing them in his mother's barn, to be used as warm bedding for the cows during the long and cold winter nights. He seemed willing enough to have an excuse for resting from his labor, and sat down beside me. I soon found him quite pleasant company.

"Is that your mother's barn?" I inquired, pointing to a large barn that could be seen through the trees at the foot of the hill. He informed me that it was, and that, by the way, it was much larger than his mother had needed since the death of his father, and served no other purpose than that of sheltering the cows which were now her only support.

"Are you often in these woods?" I asked.

"Yes; I am here every day."

"Have you ever seen any small, very small, people when you have been here?"

He had often heard sounds as if very small



people were talking and singing, and sometimes laughing, but he had never seen any of the little people themselves. He had thought that possibly the sounds were made by birds or crickets. "Once," said he, his face brightening as he recalled the fact, "I did see a large bumblebee flying through the air with something that looked for all the world like a wee little boy—oh, the very smallest boy you ever saw. I thought I heard him crying, but I am not sure. Maybe it was n't a boy; anyhow, I followed the bee through the woods until I saw him go into a hole in a big tree; but though I waited an hour or two, he did not come out again, and I got tired and went home."

I thought at once of the bright boy of my Fairy Prince. Could this have been his dear stolen child?

I asked many more questions. Was he sure it was a humblebee, or rather "bumblebee," as he called it? Did he think he could find the tree and show it to me? No, he could not; he had often looked for it since that day, but had never found it. He was not even sure that what he had seen flying through the air was a bee; it only looked like one.

I mentally resolved to find this tree myself, even if, in order to do so, I had to spend every day in the forest. It might, after all, however, be a mistake of this boy, thought I; for surely no bee could steal a fairy. Had not the Prince



himself told me that neither beast nor bird nor fish nor insect could hurt a fairy?

While reflecting upon all the boy had told me, I observed that the leaves were falling faster than usual from the trees around us, and I looked to see if the wind had arisen. There was not a breath of air stirring, and yet the leaves were coming down in showers. The summer had been very hot, and they were dry and crisp.

Could I be mistaken, or did I hear the sound of laughter and of singing as the leaves fell? I listened intently, and was soon sure that I heard the laughter and shouting of fairies. The sound seemed to come from the leaves in the air, and at last, after watching them steadily for some moments, I discovered the fairies



themselves. Some of them were climbing into the trees and others riding down to the ground on the falling leaves. They were evidently enjoying themselves hugely, for they laughed and shouted and rode races one with another, sitting upon the leaves as boys do upon sleds. I saw some of the little fellows, too impatient to wait for the leaves to fall of their own accord, actually pull them off the tree, and, jumping on them, go riding down swiftly to the ground.

It was delightful to watch them enter into the sport with such evident enjoyment. As soon as one would reach the ground he would run quickly back to the tree, and, climbing up into its branches, would catch a new leaf, or tear one from the stem, and go riding down as before.

They were the same fairies I had seen riding the waves, but instead of being richly dressed in silks of various colors, as on the day when I first saw them at the sea, they were now dressed in plain brown clothes of the same color as the leaves of the trees. This accounted for my not having observed them before.

I desired very much to find my little friend





the Prince, but he was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps he did not always come out with the rest.

At last, however, I caught sight of the dear fellow standing under a tree at some distance from that from which the fairies were riding. He stood, with arms folded, looking quietly on, and was clothed in the same rich satin in which I had at first seen him. His handsome dress, however, was now almost entirely concealed by a plain little brown cloak of the same color as the clothes of the other fairies. As he stood leaning against the trunk of the tree, the color of his cloak blended so perfectly with that of the bark of the tree that it was no wonder I had not observed him before. I was soon by his side, and could see that his face was very sad; indeed, a tear upon his cheek was evidence that he had been weeping. "He is thinking of his lost boy," I thought. Apparently he did not observe me until I was directly in front of him.

The moment he recognized me, he quickly brushed away the tear, and his face was bright with smiles.

"Ah! my dear Uncle Frank, how I have missed you!" he exclaimed. "Where have you been?"

"I have been in these very woods every day this summer looking for you, my dear Prince," I answered. I mildly reproached him for having avoided me, adding that if he had tried half as hard to find me as I had to find him we would have met before. He smiled sadly at my reproaches, and said: "We fairies cannot seek our mortal friends; they must make the effort to find us. Much as I wanted to see you, my dear fellow,"—and he threw a kiss to me with his hand,—"I could not come to show you the way. You said you knew the way to the sea-side bay."



"I have been there every day for months," said I.

"And I, too," said he, smiling; "but you must have gone to the wrong place, Uncle Frank, or I would have seen you. However, I will show you the way once more. Who is your youthful friend?"

I had forgotten the boy, who had been standing with me when I first saw the fairies, and who had followed me to where the Prince was standing. He had evidently not seen or heard the Prince at all, for he was staring at me with a most ludicrous expression of countenance, as if he thought I had gone crazy, and was talking to myself, or to the tree in front of me. I could not help smiling at his astonishment, but answered the Prince: "He is gathering leaves for his mother's cows, and is carrying them to the barn which you see at the foot of the hill."

"If he is your friend," said Uno, "I will help him do that in less time than he could carry one bagful to the barn."

He lifted his pearl horn to his lips, and sounded a clear soft note. In a moment the fairies were standing respectfully before him. Such a row of red cheeks and bright eyes I thought I had never seen. Some of them still held a leaf in one hand, as a boy would hold a sled, and they were all out of breath with the excitement of their sport.

"This boy," said the Prince, with a dignity



which he seemed to forget when speaking to me,—“this boy is a friend of Uncle Frank’s, and is carrying leaves into that barn. You might just as well be useful, while enjoying yourselves, and ride your leaves into his barn instead of to the ground. It will be a longer ride for you, and will save him much hard work.”

I turned to look at the boy, to see the effect upon him of a proposition which was likely to make his task an easy one. It was plain he had not seen or heard a single fairy, for he was regarding me with the same look of astonishment, and evidently thought I had lost my wits. I could not help laughing at his perplexity, and turned to see the effect of the Prince’s command to his little band.

With ringing shouts and merry laughter they started for the tree, and in a moment clouds of leaves were flying toward the barn. I could see them enter the barn through the doors and windows, and even through the cracks between the boards. The fairies soon returned, and, taking new leaves from the trees, started for the barn as if their lives depended upon their speed. The boy was evidently astonished, and could not understand it.

“Just look at the leaves!” he exclaimed. “Did you ever see the like! If the wind only keeps blowing ten minutes more like that, I won’t have to gather another one, for the old barn will be full.”

Fortunately for him, the wind did not stop blowing, or rather the fairies did not stop riding, until the barn was full of leaves; and the delighted boy exclaimed: "I must hurry down and shut the doors and windows, or the wind may change and blow them out again; then I'll run and tell mother. So good-by! If that ain't the biggest joke this year!" In his excitement he had run fully half-way down the hill before I bethought me to call him back and ask him to continue to look for the tree until he should find it, and then to watch it for me whenever he had time. I gave him a piece of money to pay him for his trouble, and he was soon once more on his road to the barn.

I turned to the Prince. He had been observing me, and said pleasantly, "Well, are you ready to pay me a visit?"

I replied that I was, and remarked that it was very kind of him to do so much for the poor boy.

"Oh, that is nothing," he answered. "It ought to be a pleasure for one to do a kind act. Have you ever observed," he continued, "that it is still more pleasant to do a kind act and not have it known?"

I replied that it ought to be, but that I had also observed that few were content to do an act of kindness and not wait to be thanked for it. "Now, that poor boy," said I, "evidently thinks that the wind blew the leaves into the

barn, although if he had had his wits about him he might have seen that there was not a breath of wind blowing at the time. He has not the slightest idea of giving you the credit for it."

"And I do not want the credit for it," said the noble fellow. "I think very little of those who do good only for the sake of getting credit for it."

By this time we were out of sight of the other fairies, and I inquired if we would not better wait for them to catch up with us.

He smiled. "Oh, no; they know the way well enough; besides, they have work to do yet."

"You seemed to be invisible to the boy," I said; "and I observed that though I heard every word you said, he evidently did not hear you at all."

"Yes," said the Prince; "it would not do for us to let every boy that plays in the woods see us and our mad frolics. It would empty every school-house in the neighborhood, and they would think of nothing but running through the woods trying to catch a glimpse of my merry men, just as I have seen the foolish fellows spend the whole of a summer afternoon chasing butterflies."

"My dear Prince," said I, "I found you very sad this afternoon. I do not wish to pry into your sorrows, but I would just like to say this to you: that I wish I could serve you in any way."

He looked up into my face with the same sad expression which I had observed when he was standing in the woods. "My dear Uncle Frank, I know you would; but it is out of your power to help me. On account of my poor little wife, I could not tell you, the other evening when you were with us, the sad story of our oldest boy. She has not regained her strength, although nearly two years have passed since our brave boy was stolen from us; and I have not spoken to you of it since, because I have felt that you could not help me, and because I think we ought to bear our own burdens of grief and sorrow, and not thrust them upon other people. I see, however, yours is the true friendship that would help to bear a friend's burdens."

I pressed his hand in silence. It was as I suspected, then—the boy had been stolen.



“And who could be so wicked as to rob you of your child?” I asked.

“We do not know,” said he, “but we suspect a Wood-sprite whom I had punished for some mischief he had done. He never forgave me, though I only did my duty as his King. The little boy was last seen in these very woods; but though we come here often to look for him, and though all the Birds and Crickets and Ants have looked for him every day, and the Katy-dids by night, we can learn nothing. The little fellow must be above ground, or the Ants would find him; and he must be kept inside of a tree, or the Birds and Katydids would find him; but the Squirrels and Woodpeckers are friendly to the Wood-sprites, and they, who could tell so much of what is hidden within the trees, will tell me nothing.”

“How strangely,” thought I, “does all this correspond with what the boy saw! I must find that tree. I feel sure that I am on the right track now. But the Bee!”

“Are the Bees friendly to you?” I inquired anxiously.

“The Honey-bees are, but the Humblebees are not.”

“The boy must have been right, after all,” thought I. “Oh, if I could only find that tree, what would I not give!”

“Neither the Humblebees, however,” the Prince continued, “nor any other insect, could

injure my boy or hurt a fairy in any way. The most they could do would be to conceal the place where he is hid."

"Then," thought I, "it could not have been the little Prince, after all, and the boy must have been mistaken; for if the most that an Humblebee could do would be to refuse to tell the hiding-place of the child, it would require something more powerful than a Bee to carry him off." In my perplexity, however, a new thought occurred to me.

"What does a Wood-sprite look like?" I inquired.

"Oh, they change their form very often. When traveling they frequently take the form of Humblebees—but here we are at the stone door."

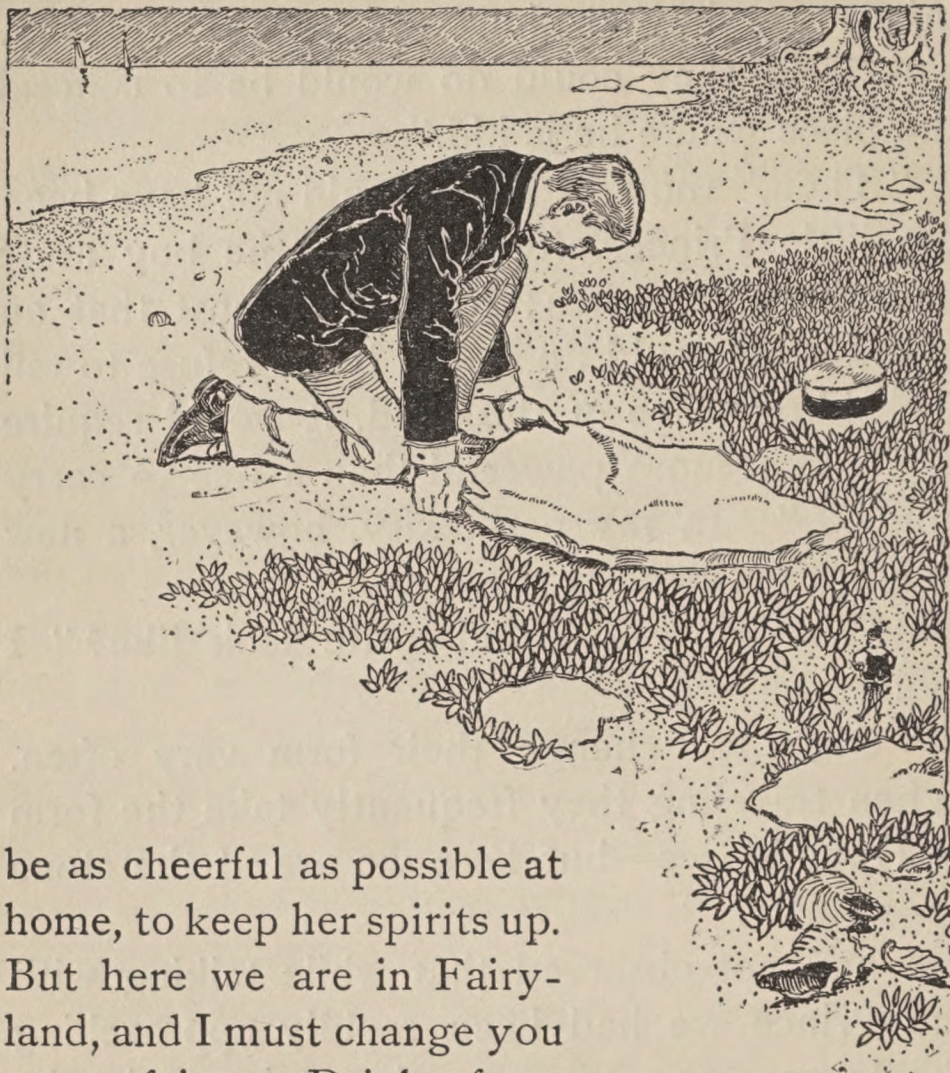
I had not observed that while talking with the Prince we had been rapidly approaching the large stone cover to the staircase in the sand. It was now directly at our feet.

I lifted it as before, without waiting to be told to do so by the Prince, and we descended, the stone closing after us, this time apparently of its own accord.

"Not a word of all this to my dear wife, Uncle Frank," said the little fellow.

"Never fear; I would not again alarm her for all the world."

"Her sorrow wears upon me almost as much as the loss of my boy," said he. "I have to

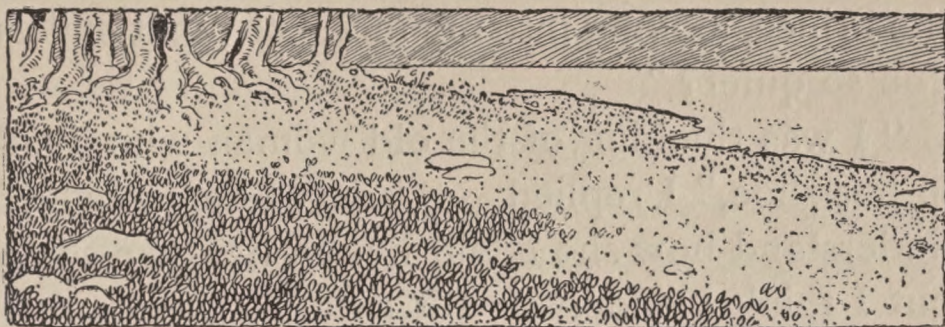


be as cheerful as possible at home, to keep her spirits up. But here we are in Fairy-land, and I must change you to a fairy. Drink from this."

He handed me a little bottle containing the liquid which before had made me so small. Placing it to my lips, I took a swallow of its contents, and soon felt myself going down, down, down, till I was no taller than the Prince himself, and could look into his beautiful blue eyes without stooping.

"I like you better this way," he said, taking my arm in his; "it is so sociable."

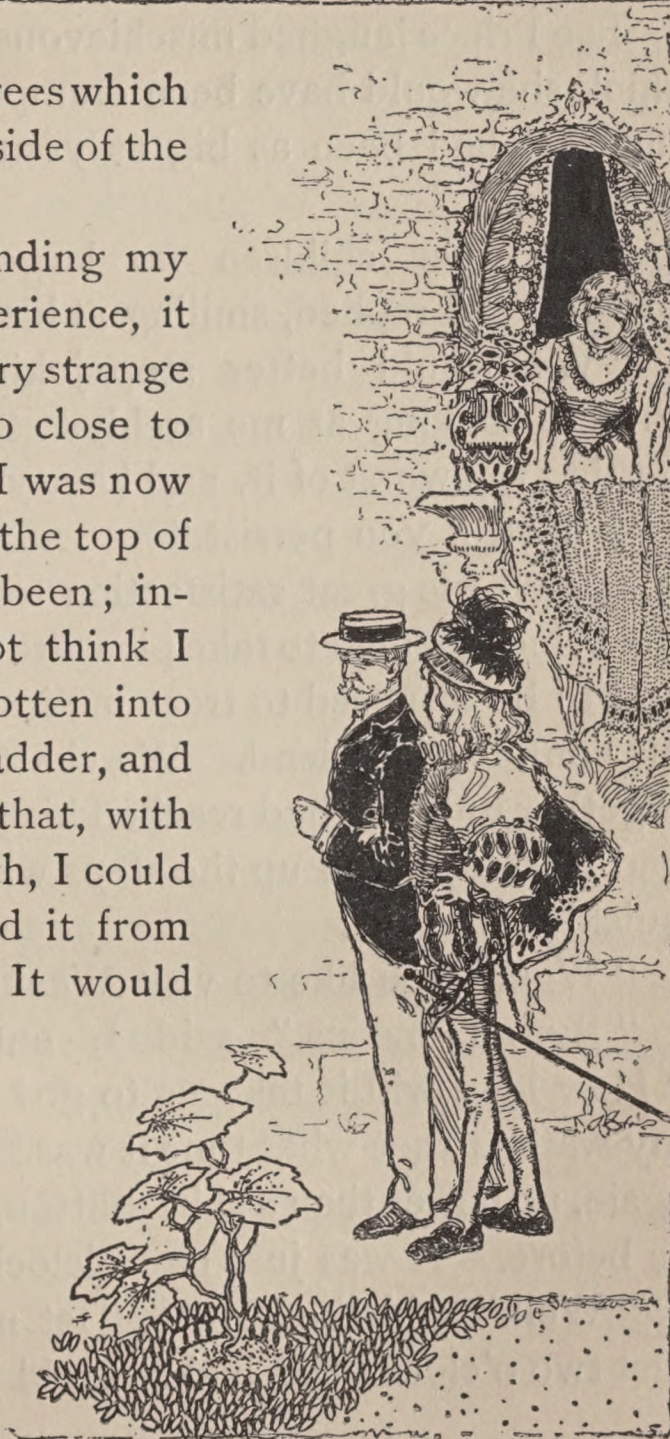
We were soon walking in the little city, under



the beautiful trees which grew on each side of the street.

Notwithstanding my previous experience, it still seemed very strange to be down so close to the ground. I was now no taller than the top of my shoe had been; indeed, I do not think I could have gotten into it without a ladder, and I am certain that, with all my strength, I could not have lifted it from the ground. It would have answered for a house for one of my present size.

“What are you thinking of?” inquired



the Prince, looking into my face. "What makes you so quiet?"

"I was thinking of the old woman who lived in her shoe," I replied. "I never before could understand how she could live in her own shoe, but I think I understand it now."

The Prince laughed mischievously. "I don't think she would have been cramped for room if her feet had been as big as yours were a moment ago!"

"And her children no larger than fairy princes!" I replied, smiling at his good humor.

"We would better stop joking," said the Prince, looking at me archly. "You will be getting the worst of it, and have your little feelings hurt, if you persist."

It gave me great satisfaction to discover that the Prince seemed to take pleasure in my society, and to be disposed to treat me in every way as his confidential friend. We chatted pleasantly together until we had reached his palace, and he had started to run up the steps when he turned quickly and said:

"Would you like to visit Weeboro to-day?"

"By all means," said I, enthusiastically. "How long will it take us to go?" I took out my watch to see what time it was. There it was again, no larger than a shirt-button, ticking away as before. It was just two o'clock.

"Well," said the Prince, "let me see. It is just two o'clock." I had not told him the time,

Evidently he could tell the time without a watch, for he had named the hour exactly. "I have," he continued, "a long-legged donkey that can get over the ground easily in about fifteen minutes."

"Well," I said, "trot him out, and we will ride over."

"We can ride only one at a time," said the Prince, dryly. "We will find him behind the woods yonder."

He pointed to a forest of trees just outside the city, and we set off at once. When behind the trees, where we could not be seen from the town, he turned to me and said, "I must now make you large again; swallow this."

He handed me a powder, which I placed upon my tongue. The effect was magical. I commenced to grow larger with prodigious rapidity, and was soon fully six feet in height.

"Lift me up," said he, "and let me sit on your shoulder. I will show you the way."

I placed him on my shoulder as directed.

"Now," said he, "I think we would better go across lots, so as not to meet any of the Weeboro people, who would be frightened out of their little wits if they should see so large and homely a giant as you are coming down the road. But we must be off. Step out!"

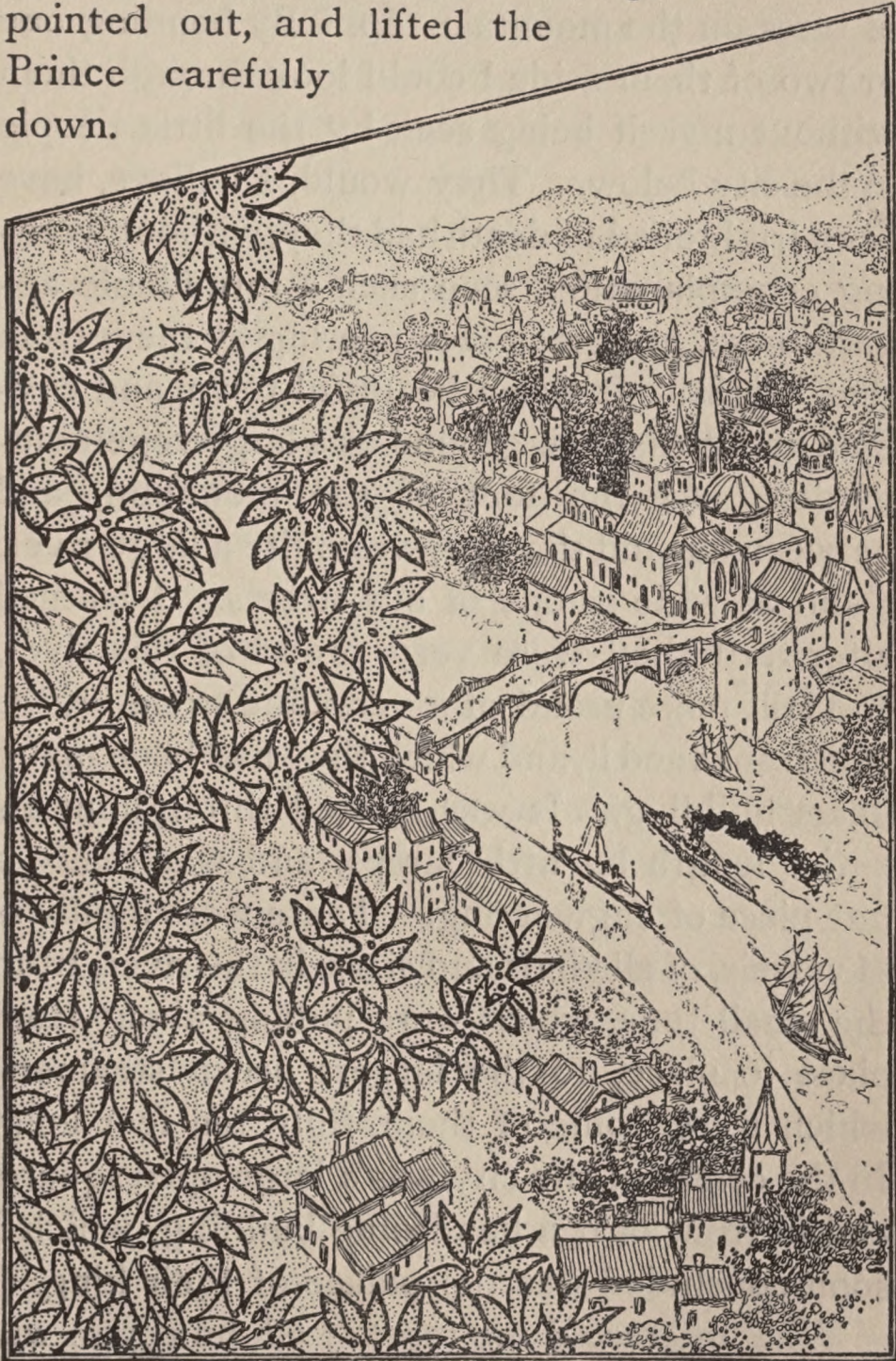
"But where is the long-legged donkey?" I asked.

"I am going to ride the donkey," said he; "you will have to walk."



He  
laughed so heartily  
at my stupidity, twitching my  
great ear and pulling my hair in his  
merriment, that, although the joke was all at  
the expense of my clumsy self, I could not help  
laughing with him, and I believe I enjoyed it as  
much as he did. In as good humor as ever were  
two mortals setting out on an excursion together,  
I commenced my tramp, feeling very much  
like a donkey, he pulling one of my ears or  
the other, as he desired me to turn right or  
left, in showing me the way. It was not diffi-  
cult for me to step over fences and ditches  
and small hills, and I verily believe that I made  
fully one of their small miles in four of my great  
steps. At such a tremendous pace we were soon

near Weeboro. "We must not go any farther in this direction," said the Prince. "We will get behind that mountain which is close to the city, and, once there, I can make you small again." I soon reached the place pointed out, and lifted the Prince carefully down.



The mountain was several feet higher than my head, and I was obliged to step on a small hill at its foot in order to look over its summit at the city which the Prince informed me was just on the other side. Fortunately, there was quite a forest of trees on the mountain-top. By bending one or two of them aside I could look through them without myself being seen by the little people in the city below. They would, I believe, have been frightened to death had they, without warning or explanation, seen such a formidable apparition as my great face peering at them from that height. It was a beautiful town, and covered about as much ground as a large vegetable-garden. At the foot of the mountain, and between me and the city, was quite a large river, about as wide as one of our streets. I learned afterward they were very proud of this river, and still more proud of a very fine stone bridge which spanned it, and which they had been many years building. It was lighted throughout its entire length by little lamps, and was really a fine piece of engineering. There were numbers of vessels, of all kinds and sizes, in the river, from the small tugs, which were puffing about from place to place, to the largest ocean steamers, which were, some of them, fully ten feet long. In the center of the city was a large open square, and in front of it a handsome building, which I soon concluded was the palace of their king.

What interested me most of all, however, was

a railroad, on which I could see a small train of cars steaming toward the city. The locomotive whistled as it came in sight of the depot, and I could see little men with red flags hurrying to the crossings and beckoning to the people to get off the track. The locomotive was certainly not more than ten inches long, and the cars in proportion. I saw the train stop at the depot, which was about two feet high and fully five feet long. I watched the little passengers get off, one by one, while their diminutive trunks were taken from the baggage-car by porters and expressmen. Carriages and omnibuses were in waiting, and were soon bustling through the streets on their way to the various hotels.

I was now conscious of something pricking my feet, as if a pin were being run into my shoe. Looking down, I saw the Prince sticking his sword, which was no longer than a pin, and very sharp, right into my foot. In my astonishment at seeing the city and its inhabitants, I had for the moment forgotten all about the little fellow, and he was endeavoring with right good will to remind me of his presence and of his claims upon my attention. I reached down in a hurry, you may be sure, and, picking him up, placed him on top of the mountain, where he could stand on a level with my face.

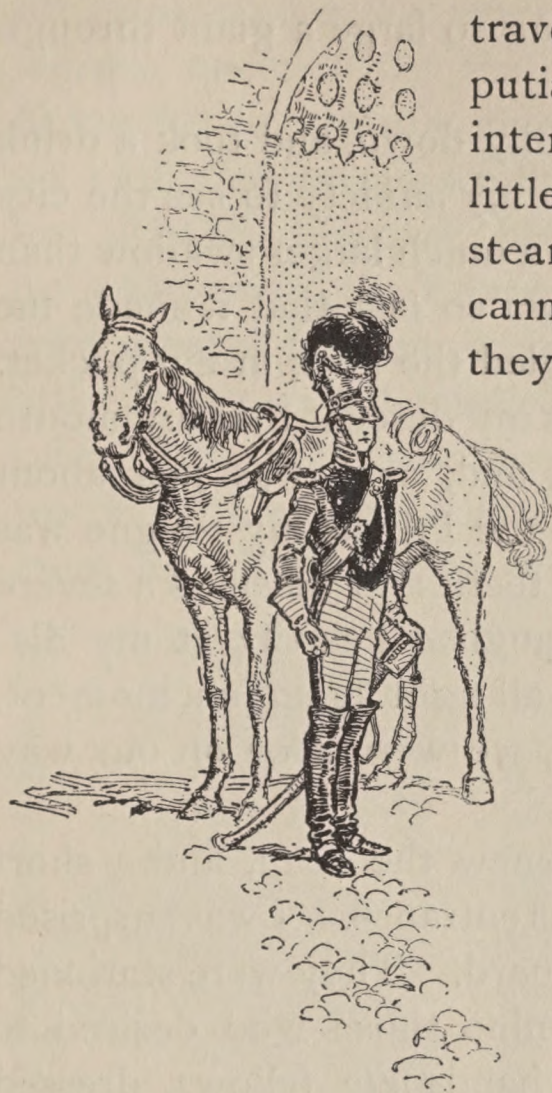
"Are you deaf?" he exclaimed. "I could not make you hear a word, though I screamed at the top of my voice. You certainly have no

corns, for I have been kicking your great clumsy feet for an hour past." And he laughed heartily, to my great relief, for I feared he was provoked with me for having neglected him.

Placed in a position where he could point out and explain the various objects of interest, he was now of great assistance to me, and as he knew every building in the city, and was acquainted with the history of the place from the earliest date, his replies to my numerous questions were both interesting and instructive.

"Weeboro," he explained, "is quite an old city, and is governed by a king, a very intelligent and worthy man, whose palace you see near the square. He is well educated, having been through college, and governs his people with much wisdom. He is a good general, too, and in the wars which are sometimes forced upon him by the ambitious and proud king of another little people, who live some thousand miles or more from Weeboro, he never fails to come off victorious. That large vessel which you see," he continued, pointing to a steamship in the river, "is one of his war-vessels, and is only one of quite a navy."

By looking intently I could plainly see the muzzles of cannon in the port-holes in her sides. I became more and more interested with all that I saw, and my interest was heightened by his intelligent explanations. The story of Gulliver's



travels among the Lilliputians had always been interesting to me, but his little folks had neither steam-vessels nor real cannon nor railroads; they had only bows and arrows to fight with; and a locomotive and train of cars such as I had just seen would probably have frightened them to death.

"It seems too bad," I remarked, "that such a very small people should find it necessary to go to war with each

other, my dear Prince. Can you do nothing to prevent it?"

"I cannot interfere," he replied thoughtfully; "they must settle that between themselves. The most I can do is to protect them from such giants as you, and that I very easily accomplish by hiding the staircases. If you wish to visit the city now, you must lift me down and take a swallow from the bottle. The little King would think I had betrayed him to destruction if he

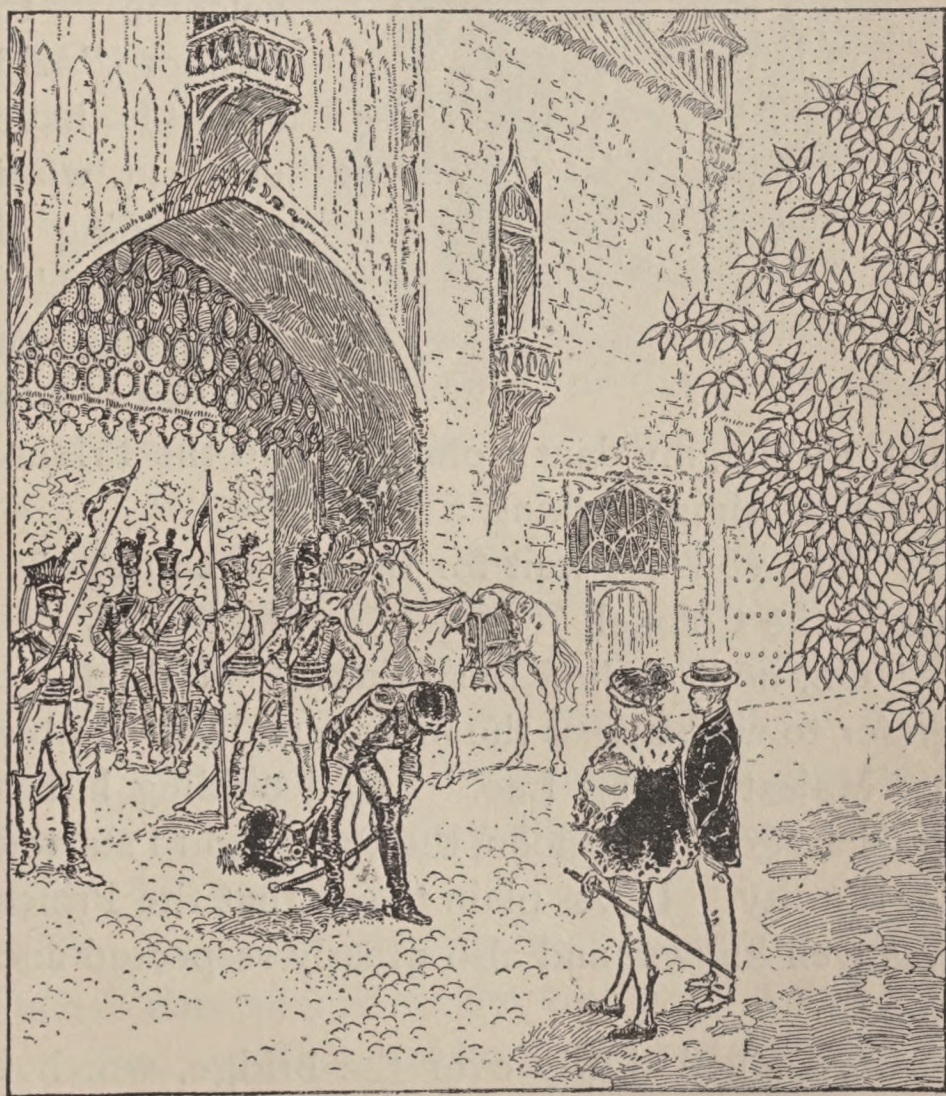
should see me leading so large a giant through his city! ”

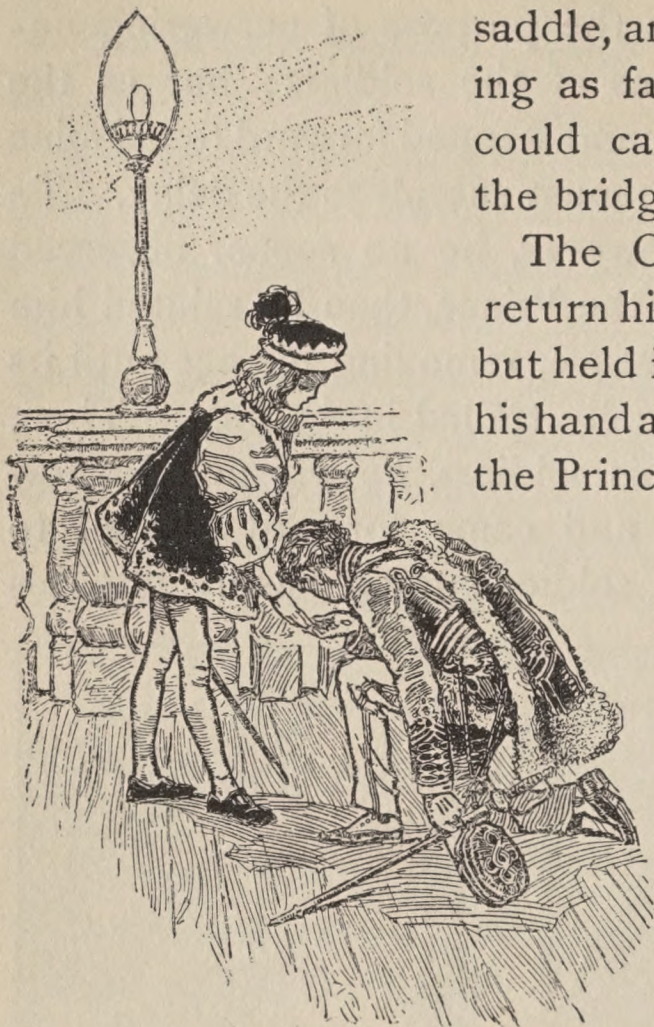
I lifted him carefully down, and took a drink from the bottle. In my anxiety to see the city I thoughtlessly took a much larger swallow than usual, and went down so fast that it made me quite dizzy, and jingled the keys in my pocket. Indeed, so rapid was my descent that my mouth closed with a snap, and, as I was just about making a remark to the Prince, my tongue was caught between my teeth and received a severe bite. The Prince laughed heartily at my discomfiture, but I was all right again in a moment, and, taking his arm, we were soon on our way to the bridge.

Fortunately, he knew the road, and a short walk brought us to its entrance. I was surprised to find soldiers on guard. They were stationed so they could examine those who desired to cross. They were handsome fellows, dressed in red coats trimmed with gold lace, and yellow trousers. Their horses—for they belonged to the cavalry—were standing near by, ready saddled and bridled. The Prince explained that the King of Weeboro was very careful of his territory, as his enemy was watchful and very aggressive, and that it was necessary to be constantly on the alert, especially at so important a place as the bridge entrance.

As I was impatient to see the city, I felt quite annoyed to think that we would have to

be detained for the purpose of answering numerous questions of the soldiers; but as the Colonel in command stepped forward to examine us, I felt that we must submit to the delay. To my surprise, however, he no sooner observed my companion, the Prince, than he saluted him with great deference, removing his hat until its little plume actually trailed in the dust. Then, calling one of his soldiers, he whispered a few words to him, and came forward himself to meet us. The soldier sprang hastily into his





saddle, and was soon riding as fast as his horse could carry him across the bridge to the city.

The Colonel did not return his hat to his head, but held it respectfully in his hand as he approached the Prince.

"Your Majesty is very welcome to Weeboro," said he. "I have just sent word to the King of your arrival."

"It was not necessary to disturb him, my dear Colonel," said the Prince. "We are simply taking a walk."

"Will you not wait for the royal carriage?" asked the Colonel.

"Oh, no," replied the Prince. "I think we prefer to walk across the bridge, and not trouble his Majesty, King Leo." And bidding him a gracious good afternoon, the Prince and I started for the city. It was plain to see that the Prince was well known, and also greatly respected and liked.

We walked slowly over the bridge, which I

examined carefully at every step. It was remarkably well built. At every few feet there were very handsome lamps. It must have been as light by night as by day. We were not more than half-way across when I could hear a band of music approaching. I soon saw a whole army of little soldiers, with their flags flying and muskets glistening in the sun, marching toward us. None of them was taller than the Prince. As they approached us, I could see several small policemen keeping back the crowd, to make room for them to march.

Directly behind the advance-guard was a very elegant open carriage, drawn by four white horses. As it approached us the door opened, and a fine-looking man, very richly dressed in black velvet trimmed with gold lace, and carrying carelessly under his arm a handsome sword with a jeweled hilt, stepped to the ground and came forward to meet us. His eyes were black, but his hair slightly gray.

"My dear Prince," said he, "how kind of you to come and visit me so informally!"

To my surprise, he knelt down gracefully, and kissed the hand of my companion. "Evidently," thought I, "Uno must be a very important personage, when even this king stoops to kiss his hand."

The Prince raised him to his feet, and embraced him affectionately, saying, "Arise, my dear Leo; we have only come to make a short

call, as my Uncle Frank, here, desires to make your acquaintance and to see your beautiful city."

"Any member of your royal family is most welcome," said the King, turning to me and extending his hand cordially. "We will do our best to see that he enjoys himself. But you must both be tired walking; let me assist you to the carriage."

The Prince turned to me, and motioned for me to enter. I did so. Both he and the King followed. No sooner were we seated than the King nodded to the officer in command, and the procession started. The band, a very fine one, struck up a lively march, and it seemed to me I had never heard better music. It was amusing, however, to observe the musicians. They had small brass horns, precisely like those of the larger bands to which I had been accustomed; and as they played upon their instruments, they puffed out their rosy cheeks until their eyes seemed starting out of their heads. The bass-drum was no larger than a small pill-box, and the fife no bigger than a pin.

The streets were full of people, all anxious to see the Prince, who was evidently a great favorite. They frequently cheered him lustily, and pressed so closely at times upon the carriage that the little policemen had hard work to make room for us. Uno bowed pleasantly right and left. I did the same.

I observed that, while the Prince joked freely and sociably with me when we were alone together, in the presence of the King he was very dignified. I was discreet enough to treat him with as much respect as I saw every one else did.

We rode through the principal business street. The small stores, with their goods displayed for sale, and numerous signs to attract the attention of the public, were very interesting to me. In several of the cross-streets I saw railroad tracks and small horse-cars.

At last the carriage drew up in front of the palace, and the procession stopped. The soldiers formed quickly into line, holding their guns respectfully before them, and King Leo stepped out. He invited us to enter the palace. As we reached the top of the steps, he turned for a moment to say a few words to the people. They were all attention.

"My dear citizens," said he, "our good friend, Prince Uno, with an esteemed relative of his, has come to visit our city quite informally. In his walks about the town he naturally does not wish to attract attention, or to be surrounded with crowds of people. Since it is his royal pleasure to move about among us for the time as a private citizen, I feel certain that you will accord him that privilege, and see that he is not annoyed."

They removed their hats immediately, and



after giving three enthusiastic cheers for Prince Uno and the King, were soon on the way to their homes, having dispersed in the most orderly manner. I was much impressed with their decorous behavior, and with the splendid discipline which seemed to prevail throughout the entire city.

We now turned to enter the palace, and were met at the door by the Queen, to whom I was presented by Prince Uno. She was a handsome middle-aged lady, who had most

agreeable manners, and gave us a hearty welcome.

"My dear Prince," said she, holding out both little hands to him, "how more than glad I am to see you!—and your friend also," she added graciously, bowing to me. "And how is that loveliest of women, the Princess Ino?"

"She is quite well, my dear Queen, and would have come with us had she known of our trip. The fact is, Uncle Frank was very eager to see your city, and I, knowing the time required by you ladies to prepare for even so short a journey, hesitated to detain him while that 'loveliest of women' completed her toilet. So we came away without letting her know anything about it. I suppose I will receive a scolding when I return."

"You are not a properly managed and disciplined husband," said the Queen, archly. "Leo would not have dared do such a thing. I must give the Princess a hint or two. But come in, you two runaways, and see our baby. You have not yet seen him, my dear Prince, and he is such a fine fellow, and to be named for you, too," she added, turning to him. "You surely would not miss seeing your namesake!"

"I certainly would not miss paying my respects to his Royal Highness," said the Prince, laughing; "so we will ask for an audience without delay."

As the Queen led the way, I had a better opportunity to observe her graceful form. The

charming mother was not over three inches tall. "What must the baby be?" thought I.

She requested us to take chairs in the parlor while she ran up-stairs for it.

The room in which we now found ourselves was a handsome apartment with frescoed ceiling. The walls were almost covered with elegant pictures, many of which, I was informed by the Prince, had been painted by the Queen herself, who was quite an artist. Indeed, I was delighted with her handiwork. Adjoining the parlor was the library, well stored with handsome books, and provided with easy-chairs and a cheerful fireplace. I am certain I could not have read the print of the books if my eyes had not been exceedingly good. On the parlor mantel were some exquisite bronzes. They were not larger than the charms on my watch-chain at home. Indeed, I would have been delighted to have had one or two for that purpose.

While examining them the Queen returned. I shall never forget so long as I live the cunning wee baby she brought to show to us. It was dressed in long skirts, and all of its clothes were handsomely embroidered—by the Queen's own hand, as I was informed. The sleeves were caught up at the shoulders with small blue ribbons. Its head was not larger, I am sure, than a small pea, and yet its eyes were open, and it stared at us with them as if it had known us before, and was trying to recall when and



where it had seen us. I asked to be permitted to hold it in my arms for a moment, but no sooner had I received it from her Majesty, the Queen-mother, than it commenced to cry, and I was obliged to return it to her. How small its tiny hands were! It opened and shut them, however, moving the wee little fingers just as I have seen larger babies do. Small as the fingers were, what was my surprise to see on one of them a gold ring! It was such a tiny ring that I am sure it would have been difficult to slip it over a pin! The baby soon grew tired of being exhibited, and showed its displeasure by doubling its little hands up into fists, and rubbing its eyes vigorously until it commenced to cry. The nurse, who had been standing near at hand,

dressed in white apron and cap, then took it up-stairs to the nursery. We could hear it crying there for some time afterward, notwithstanding its proud mother had just claimed for it that it was "the very best baby in the world, and never gave any trouble."

The King, who had not entered the parlor with us, owing to some business matters to which he was obliged to attend, now made his appearance at the door. Prince Uno, turning to the Queen, said, "We must now ask your Majesty to excuse us for an hour or two, as we wish to make a tour of the city for Uncle Frank's benefit, and have little time to spare."

"I will not detain you longer," said the Queen. "I feel highly honored by your visit. Do not fail to call before you return home, however."

The Prince assured her that he would not, and, bowing politely, we took our leave, accompanied by the King, whose carriage was waiting for us.

Uno, who always seemed to know my wishes before I expressed them, said, "I think we will not make use of your carriage, my dear Leo. Uncle Frank wishes to enter the stores to make some purchases, and desires to visit some of the manufactories, as well as the steamers in the river, and we would have to be continually getting in and out of the carriage if we rode."

"Just as you prefer," said the King; "but

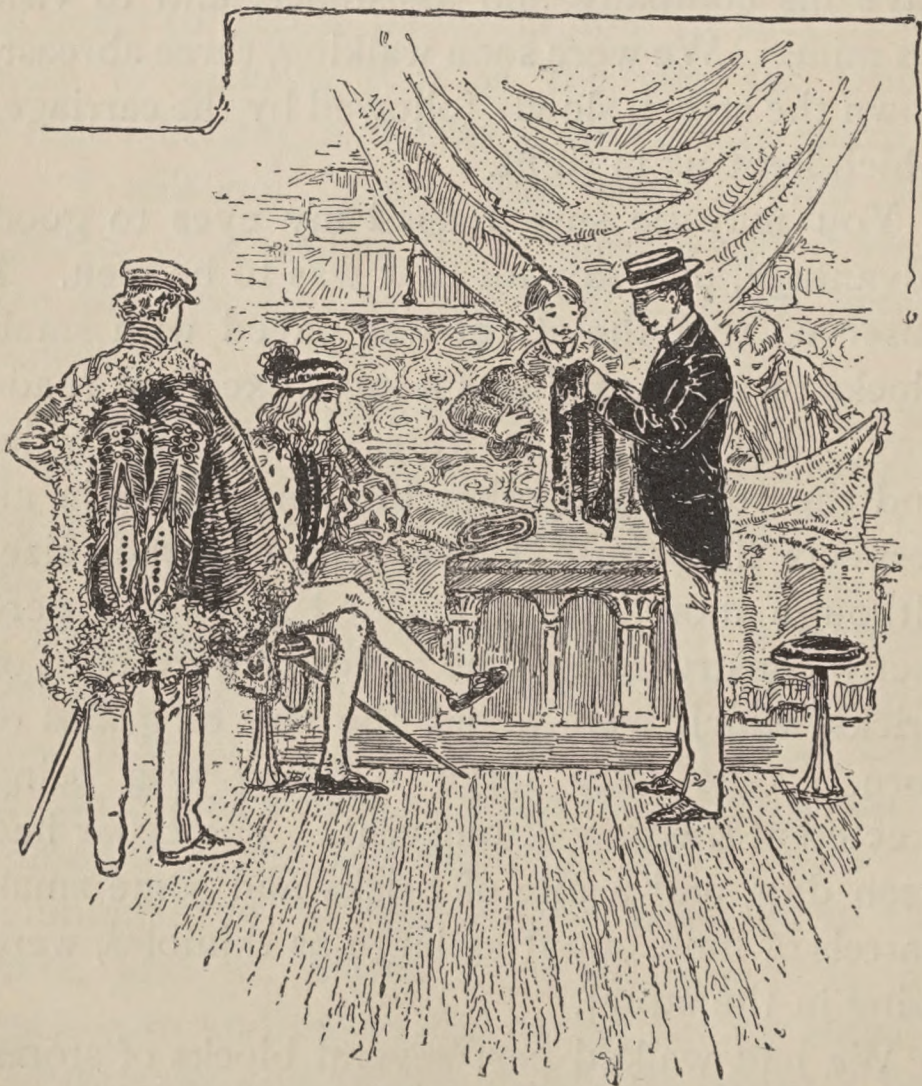
permit me to go with you, as my acquaintance with the city will be of some service to you. I will not dismiss the carriage, however, as after you have finished your tour of the city, I should like to have you visit our coal-mine, some three miles from here. I feel certain it will interest you, and besides, my dear Prince, I need your advice about the management of it. It has of late become so dangerous that every month some of my poor miners are killed in it."

We replied that we should be very glad to have his company and assistance, and to visit his mine. We were soon walking, three abreast, down the street, slowly followed by the carriage, which kept us in sight.

You may be sure I used my eyes to good advantage, and saw all that was to be seen. I observed that the street was paved with small blocks of stone, and was a most excellent roadway. The sidewalks were smooth and wide, and the stores and other buildings were in all respects like those I had seen of larger size, although more neatly finished and more perfectly constructed. The majority were built of bricks, which were about the size of grains of corn. One very large building was being erected at the time of our visit. The cellar had been dug, and a pile of bricks and some small barrels of lime, about as large as thimbles, were lying in the street.

We had walked past several blocks of stores

when I decided to enter one. It was a dry-goods store. The shelves were filled with attractive goods, and behind the counter stood little salesmen, selling silks and cloths which were not wider than narrow ribbons. After making one or two purchases, we entered a grocery store, where I was much interested in the size of the articles kept for sale as compared with those of like kind at home. Pumpkins were no larger than apples, while apples were no bigger than huckleberries. I should have



been pleased to take with me, as a curiosity, the small pair of scales on the counter. After leaving this store, a short walk brought us to the post-office of the city. It was amusing to see the people waiting to get the small letters which the postmaster handed out to them through the window, which was itself no larger than one of our postage-stamps. Next to the post-office was a hardware store, and in we went. I requested the clerk behind the counter to show me some pocket-knives. I desired some six-bladed ones. He displayed a number of different kinds for me to examine. They were about as large as grains of wheat, though perhaps not quite so thick, and perfect in every respect. I was so delighted with them that I bought a dozen to take back with me as curiosities, to the evident satisfaction of the small storekeeper. The King would not let me pay for them, but insisted on their being charged to his account. I protested, but it was of no use.

We next came to a bank, and I could see the clerks, with tiny pens behind their ears, bustling about, some of them counting out money, and others making entries in the books. There was an iron safe in which to lock up the money and the books. I was informed that this safe was necessary only as a protection against fire. I was gratified to learn that it was entirely unnecessary so far as thieves were concerned.

All people in this happy land were honest. There was no one capable of telling a falsehood, or of taking anything which did not belong to him.

The next place of interest was a barber's shop. I stood at the door and looked in without entering. Several gentlemen were sitting in small chairs, being shaved. One of the barbers was cutting a little boy's hair. If the scissors had been as large as those used at home, one careless clip of the shears would have cut the boy's head off.

After leaving the barber's shop we came to a drug-store with tiny red and blue bottles in the window. "They have very fine soda-water in this store," said the King, "and I wish you both to try a glass with me." We were soon standing in front of the fountain, which was a beautiful affair of white marble with silver faucets. I took lemon, the Prince sarsaparilla, and the King raspberry. Such little tumblers, all foaming and running over, as we held to our mouths! It was exceedingly refreshing—the very best soda I ever drank. The King paid for it, and we went out.

A short walk brought us to a small building which greatly interested me. It was a school-house. As we entered the door I could see the little scholars sitting on the benches. They were very small children, not over an inch long. In other respects, however, they looked and

behaved very much the same as I had seen larger children behave in schools at home. I observed one boy, for instance, while the attention of the teacher was directed to us, take advantage of the opportunity to snatch a hasty bite from a tiny apple which he had concealed in his desk. The teacher was a determined-looking little woman wearing spectacles. To my surprise, she was at the time of our entrance deliberately putting some small boys into a bag. The bag, quite a large one, was soon full, and I could not resist the temptation to inquire the reason for so strange a proceeding. "It is my plan of whipping impartially," she replied. "These boys have none of them learned their lesson; and that I may not be accused of whipping one more severely than another, I place them all in this bag, give the bag a good shaking, thus" (and she suited the action to the word), "to mix them up well, and proceed to whip the bag soundly." And she did so thoroughly, while we looked on. From the noises which issued from the bag, I could not doubt that the boys were very impartially and soundly whipped. As she took them out one by one they seemed much improved, and evidently had no fault to find with her fairness. Indeed, as they walked to their seats I observed that their faces were entirely free from those expressions of dissatisfaction so common to whipped scholars of larger schools. I was much edified

and impressed with this system of punishment, and expressed my approbation of it.

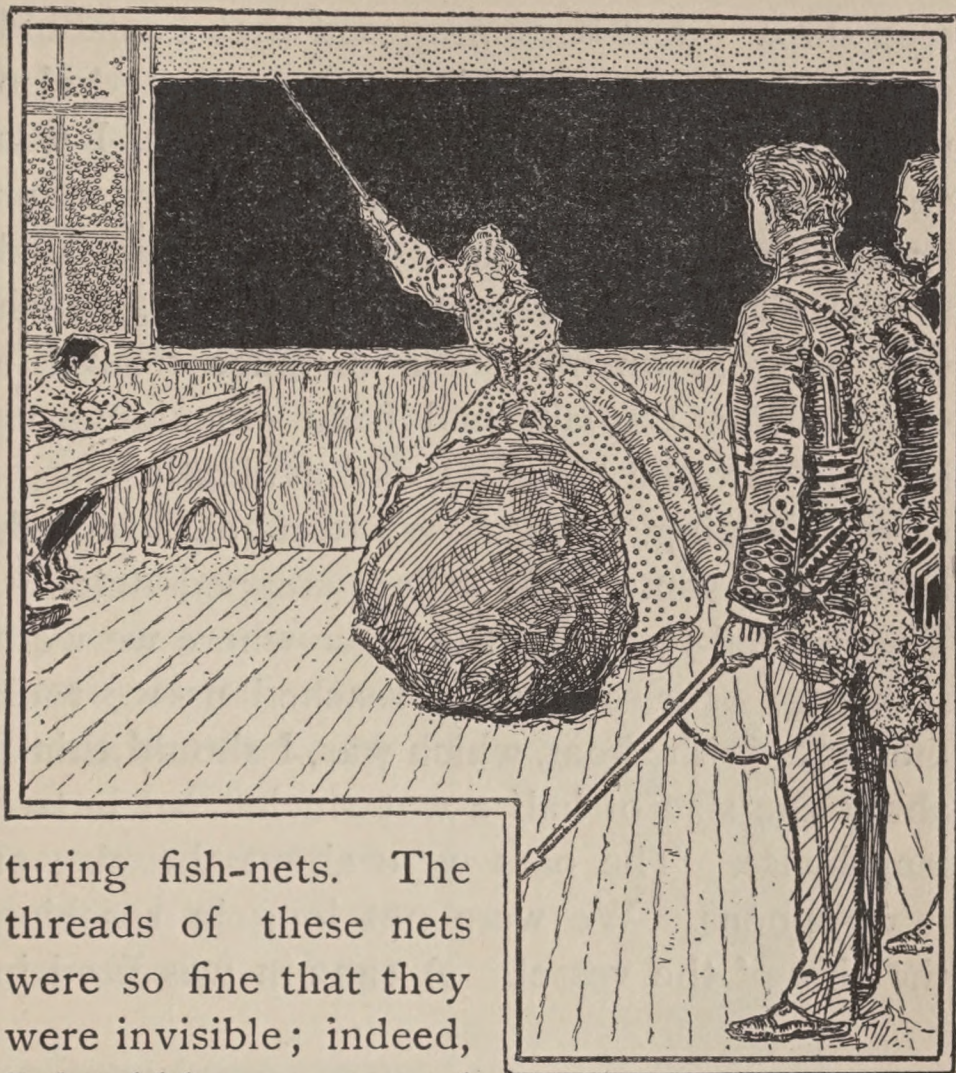
“Oh, it is the only way to manage a school without being utterly worn out with complaints from both scholars and parents,” said the energetic little woman. “I have had no difficulty since I adopted the bag plan. It leaves no room for complaint, if one only shakes the bag thoroughly. I think of taking out a patent for it.”

We thanked her for her explanation, and, bidding her good day, left the school.

“I should like to have you examine a new and very large sawmill which is near at hand,” said the King.

I expressed my desire to see it. We were not long in reaching it. The building was possibly as large as a dry-goods box. As we entered the door the saws were at work upon logs which I should think were about as large as sticks of peppermint candy. The little workmen had hard work handling them. The saws were very sharp. Those of a circular form were about the size of silver dollars. When the engine was started, they were not long in turning a good-sized log into very nice little boards.

After spending a few minutes in the sawmill we visited a large cloth-mill, in which were hundreds of small looms weaving beautiful cloth of various colors. In one corner of the mill were some looms of very intricate workmanship, which, I was informed, were used for manufac-



turing fish-nets. The threads of these nets were so fine that they were invisible; indeed, I should have supposed the machine to be running upon air, instead of upon a fabric, if I had not been requested by the foreman of the mill to feel of the fish-net as it issued from the loom. To my astonishment, I could easily feel the meshes, and discovered that the nets themselves were very strong and might easily hold the largest fish. "How easy," thought I, "must it be to catch fish in nets which they cannot see!"

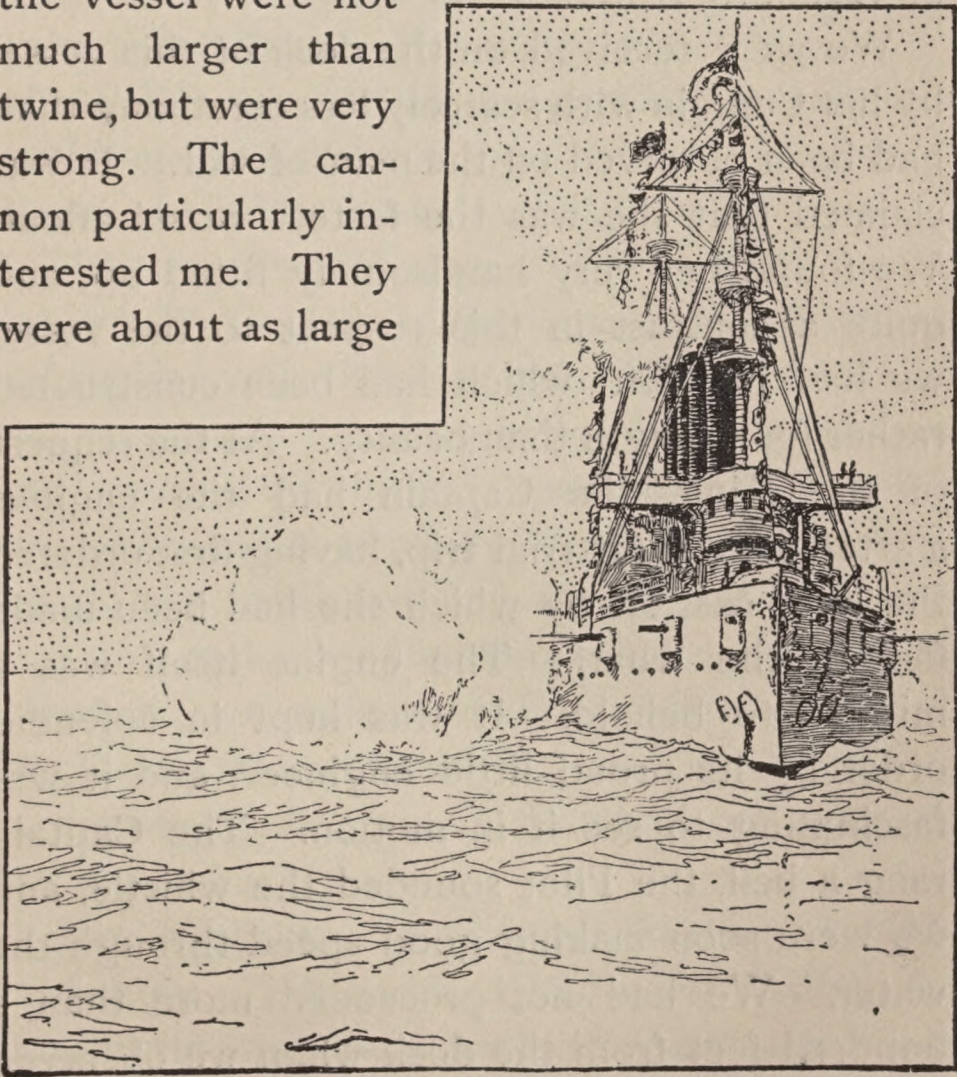
As we left this interesting mill I found that we were very near to the river on which I had

seen ships. The King proposed that we should go on board of one of his war-vessels, and also upon one of his large ocean steamers. I was very glad to accept his invitation. A few steps brought us to the wharf. The King signaled to the Captain of a large man-of-war, which was lying at anchor some distance from the shore. The Captain had been examining us intently through his glass, and evidently recognized the King, for we soon saw a boat lowered, into which some little sailors stepped quickly. They pulled lustily to the place where we were standing. As soon as it reached us we took our seats in the boat, which was, I should think, about the size of half a watermelon cut in two lengthwise. The oars were about the size of table-spoons. We were not long in reaching the side of the vessel. A cannon was fired in



honor of our arrival. By means of a small rope-ladder we reached the deck, where we found the sailors and marines drawn up in line to receive us. They were a hardy-looking set of fellows, dressed in blue flannel shirts with wide collars, and in trousers which were very tight around the waist and quite wide in the legs, just such as I had seen sailors wear at home.

The Captain and other officers received us with great respect, and took pains to explain everything to my satisfaction. The ropes of the vessel were not much larger than twine, but were very strong. The cannon particularly interested me. They were about as large



as the toy cannon with which I had seen boys play at home. They were effective, however, even at long distances. I was informed that the gunpowder, manufactured under King Leo's personal supervision, was a remarkably good article. After a thorough inspection of this interesting vessel we again entered the boat, and, having taken leave of the Captain, were rowed by the sailors to the side of a steamship built to carry passengers across the ocean—probably to some little Europe which the people of Weeboro visited.

We were received on the deck of this vessel by her Captain with scarcely less ceremony than had been observed on the man-of-war. It was claimed that she was the fastest vessel afloat. We found her very handsomely fitted up, and quite a contrast in this respect to the vessel we had just left, which had been constructed rather for strength than beauty. At the request of the King, the Captain had the engines started for a short trial trip, having first ordered the lines cast off by which she had been made fast to the wharf. The engine itself was a miracle to behold. It was kept in splendid order by its proud little engineer, and it was fascinating to see it in motion. The Captain rang a bell, the Pilot sounded the whistle, and we were soon making good speed through the water. We had not proceeded more than a hundred feet from the dock when we observed

a carriage driven furiously to the wharf. It contained some passengers who supposed that they were too late to catch the steamer and that she was starting on her regular trip. They were greatly excited as they stepped out of the carriage, and, waving their little tickets, called to the Captain to take them on board. The Captain smiled at their worry, but did not, of course, stop the vessel to return for them. I was greatly amused to see one of the gentlemen evidently scolding the driver of the carriage for not having made better time.



After a pleasant ride of a few miles, during which the Captain invited us to go below and take some refreshments in the cabin, which was very elegantly fitted up in hard woods, the bow of the vessel was turned toward the wharf. We were not long in reaching the dock, to which the vessel was made fast. A small gang-plank was run out, and after thanking the Captain for his courtesy, we walked ashore. Here we found the little passengers waiting, very much relieved to discover that, after all, they had not been left behind.

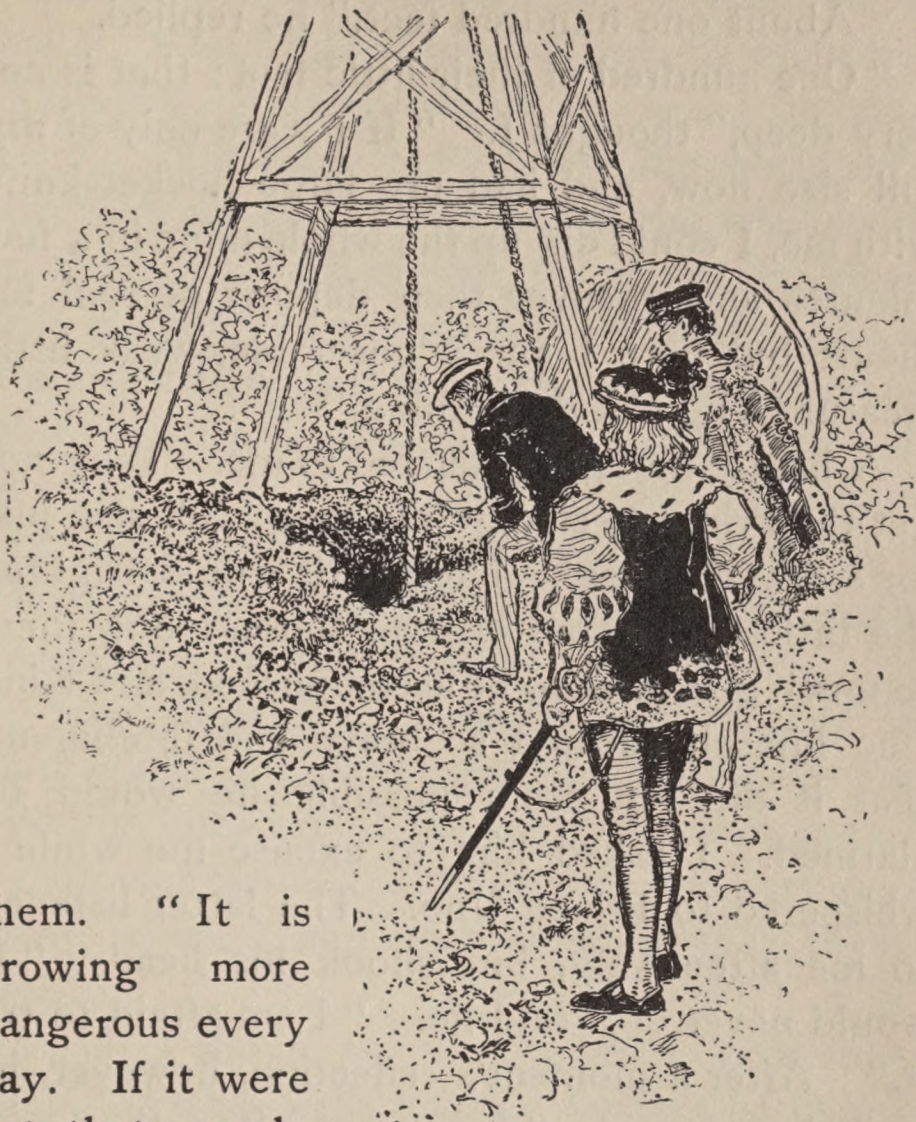
The King now suggested that we visit his coal-mine. His carriage had been waiting for us, and its white horses were tossing their heads

and shaking their long silken manes, impatient to start. We took our seats, the driver climbed to his box, the footman closed the door and took his station behind, and with a crack of the whip, which was entirely unnecessary for such spirited little animals, we were soon rolling along in the direction of the coal-mine. At such a rattling pace the city was quickly left behind, and I was soon greatly enjoying the fresh country air.

In the midst of a large field I observed some small frame buildings, which, I was informed, contained the machinery for working the mines. We left the roadway, and driving through a wide gate, alighted from the carriage, and were received by the Superintendent of the mine. There were little piles of coal around its mouth. A wheel with a long rope, which hung down into a deep black hole, showed me where the miners went underground to work. While we were observing it the wheel commenced to turn and the rope to come up out of the hole. Soon a large wooden bucket, in which were standing two of the miners with little black faces and small lamps in their hats, came in sight. As the bucket reached the level of the ground they stepped out of it, and, seeing the King, took their hats off and extinguished their lamps.

The King stepped up to them and said, "Well, my good men, how does the good work go on?"

"Very poorly, your Majesty," replied one of



them. "It is growing more dangerous every day. If it were not that people must have coal, I, for one, would never go down again."

"I sometimes think," said the King, turning to us, "that I will close this mine and not let my poor fellows go down in it any more. Every month or two there is a fearful accident, and numbers of them are killed. But what am I to do? As the man says, people must have coal."

I wondered how deep the mine could be. I asked the King.

"About one hundred feet," he replied.

"One hundred of their little feet; that is not very deep," thought I. "If I were only of my full size now, and had my large pocket-knife with me, I could dig up the whole mine in a few minutes and uncover their deposit of coal for them; but here I am, a miserable, weak little creature who can do nothing."

A happy thought occurred to me. Why not get the Prince to change me to my full size just for a few minutes? I feared it would frighten the little people out of their senses; but, then, so much good was to be accomplished, and King Leo himself seemed so brave and intelligent, that it did not seem possible he would be alarmed. I asked him to excuse me while I whispered to Prince Uno. The latter listened to me attentively, but shook his head. "It would never do," said he. "I am afraid to try it." After a moment's reflection, however, he smiled and said: "I am not altogether sure about it, either. It would be a good joke, and rather a practical one, too. I do not like practical jokes as a rule, but this one seems so eminently practical that I believe we will try it. We will endeavor to prepare the King for your change of character."

I undertook the task, and inquired of Leo how large were the very largest people he had ever seen.

"Well," he replied, "there is at present a

circus in town which has a giant twice as tall as I am." And he drew himself proudly up to his full height. "I have heard, however," he continued, "that there are men in the world upstairs who are all of them giants, and who could eat their meals off of the top of that building while standing on the ground beside it." And he pointed to a shed about the size of a bureau. "But the story is so ridiculous that I never believed it."

It was plain that he had no idea how large ordinary men were, and that I must approach my purpose very carefully.

"Your Majesty is a brave man," I began, "and could not, I am sure, be frightened by anything, not even at the sight of a man as tall as that mountain." I pointed to the very one behind which I had been standing that afternoon.

"Well, I should not want to be too near such a man," said the little fellow, "for fear he might step on me."

"But suppose I should tell you that I was at times nearly as tall as that mountain, what then?"

"I should say you were telling a story," said he, smiling.

"But," I continued, laughing, "if Prince Uno here, who possesses wonderful powers, should change me into a man of that size, and I should while possessing the strength dig up your entire

coal-mine for you, would you not be willing to have Prince Uno make the experiment?"

The King evidently was inclined to think that I was wasting time and trifling with a man of his intelligence. Prince Uno, with a smile of good nature, came to my assistance.

"My dear King," said he, "Uncle Frank is not joking, I assure you, but is in sober earnest. He is, in fact, one of the large giant people upstairs of whom you have heard, and is, when of his natural size, quite as large as he says. He could easily uncover your whole mine for you in a few minutes. I can change him to his own great size, if you are willing, as easily as I changed him to his present size in order that he might visit you. He will be only too glad to help you, and you will find him a valuable and powerful friend."

The King seemed astounded and perplexed. "My dear Prince," said he, "I can believe anything you tell me, even though it be so incredible as this. I cheerfully consent to your making this change, for the sake of the great good it will accomplish."

He regarded me attentively. Prince Uno handed me a powder, which I swallowed. I commenced to lengthen out, and to go up, up, up, above the Prince and the King, above the shed, above the very tallest building, almost to the height of the mountain itself. Notwithstanding his preparation for the change, the King turned

slightly pale; but Prince Uno, with a reassuring smile, said, "There is no danger, my dear Leo; you have no idea what a good-natured giant he is."

"The horses! the horses!" exclaimed the King. We had forgotten the little animals. Frightened at the terrible giant who had so suddenly grown up beside them, they were running away toward the city at the top of their speed, dragging the beautiful carriage after them so rapidly that its wheels scarcely touched the ground. The poor little driver and footman were scarcely less frightened than the horses, and could do nothing to stop them.

"They will kill themselves and break my carriage," cried the King, wringing his hands, "and do so much damage in the city!" He seemed to forget his fear of me in his apprehension for the consequences to others.

I realized the danger and that I must catch the frightened little animals before doing anything else. Notwithstanding their speed, owing to which they had already made considerable progress, it took but three of my long steps to overtake them. I caught them securely in my great hands, holding them as easily as I would a couple of good-sized rats. How they kicked against my sturdy fingers to get free! I patted them gently with one hand while holding them with the other, and brought them back, carriage and all, to the King. They were now

so thoroughly frightened that they did not dare to run, and after I had secured them by their halters to a post of the fence, they stood quietly, although trembling in every limb, turning to look at me from time to time with a most ludicrous expression of fear and astonishment.

We had been so occupied with the horses that we had forgotten the two little miners who had come up out of the mine. With faces pale with fright and hair standing up straight all over their little heads, they gave a loud cry as I

turned toward them from my task of securing the horses, and started at the top of their speed for the city. I could not help laughing at their fear, and was joined by the King



and the Prince, who were both greatly amused. The King himself had by this time entirely recovered from his fright, and seemed to enjoy the novelty of having so powerful a friend as I now proved myself to be.

"If you will now call up the other miners from below, my dear King, I will commence my task," said I.

He did so. No sooner were they fairly above ground than they too, after taking one look at my huge form, started for the city as fast as their little legs could carry them. The King was now thoroughly amused, and actually grew red in the face with laughter.

When the men were out of the mine I took my knife out of my pocket. It had always been an unusually large one, and was, like myself, grown to its full size. Kneeling down by the mine, I scraped out a large and deep hole, and was not long in reaching the coal. It was a large lump, about as thick as a bureau, and extended to a great distance under the ground. In one corner of it was a hole, out of which the miners had dug their coal for several years. I cleared the earth carefully away, so as to leave the entire end of the vein uncovered and in full sight. The little fellows could now break it off easily and without danger. The King was delighted.

"Am I dreaming," he asked, "or awake and in full possession of my eyesight?"

"Awake," said the Prince, "and under many obligations to Uncle Frank."

"Indeed I am," said the grateful monarch; "I cannot thank him enough. How can I ever repay you?" said he, turning to me.

"By never alluding to it again, my dear King. What I have done is a mere trifle, and you are very welcome."

"A mere trifle!" he repeated, looking thoughtfully at the work I had performed and the coal which I had uncovered for him.

It must have seemed an Herculean task to him, after all.

It was now time for us to return. I decided to walk, as I could easily keep up with the King's carriage. The horses no longer showed a disposition to run away, probably realizing that it would be useless to try. The King and the Prince suggested that it would be best for them to go first and prepare the little people for my coming, as we should doubtless find them excited by the stories told them by the miners who had preceded us.

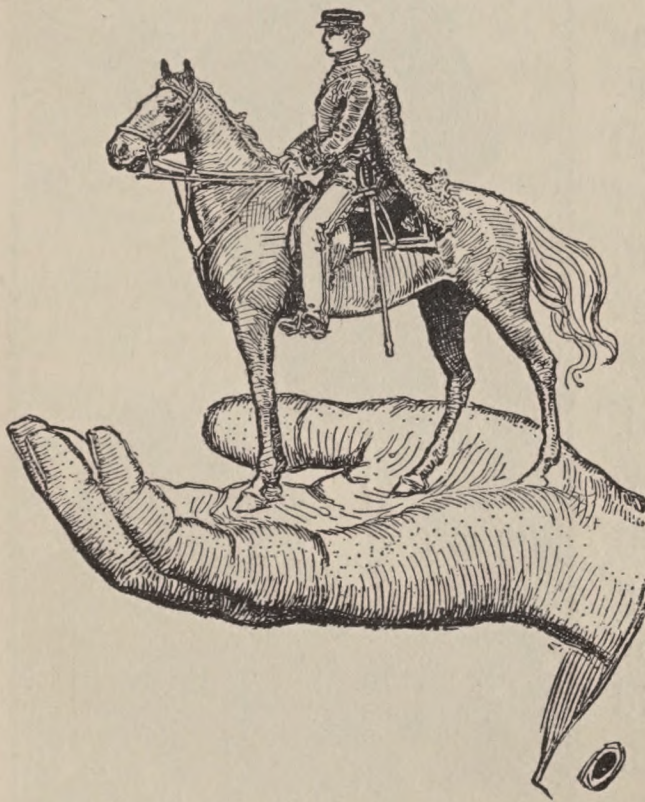
The suggestion proved a wise one, as they found the city in a great state of excitement. The miners had told the people that they had no doubt that the King and the Prince had both been killed by the "Mountain Man," as they were pleased to call me.

With the thoughtfulness of a good husband, Leo drove directly to the palace to relieve the

fears of the Queen. He then returned on horseback to meet me, followed by crowds of people, who were very desirous to see me as soon as they found there was no danger. I had the pleasure of meeting them on the road. Notwithstanding their preparation, they no sooner caught sight of me than it required all the assurances of the King to keep them from running

back to the city.

He permitted me to lift him, horse, saddle, and all, in one of my great hands, from the ground to the level of my face, where he sat calmly erect, like a beautiful equestrian statue. This act of confidence



on his part probably did more than all his arguments to quiet the fears of his subjects. When I returned him safely to the earth on his little charger, they were thoroughly reassured as to my good nature, and we all entered the city together.

The Queen was, of course, astonished to see

me. Great was her amazement when I induced ten or twelve of the bravest officers of the army to step upon my open hand, and lifted them without difficulty, as upon a great platform, to a level with the roof of the palace itself, after which I returned them safely to the ground. Prince Uno now reminded me that it was growing late and high time that we should be setting out for home. So I bade them good-by. I had to speak almost in a whisper, as my great voice was deafening to the little folk, and my breath so much like a whirl-



wind that it blew off the hats of several officers toward whom I happened to be looking when I spoke. I lifted the Prince to my shoulder and started for the river, King Leo having first made me promise faithfully that I would return and make him another visit.

"What is his name, Prince Uno? What is his name?" called out the little people, as I moved off.

"Donkey!" shouted the Prince, laughing immoderately. He turned his head to conceal his merriment, and kicked me in the side with his foot. "Call him Donkey."

We were soon at the bridge, and here a new difficulty presented itself. It was plain that I could not, with safety to the structure, cross it. My immense weight would have crushed it.

"I will change you," said the Prince, "if you will put me down."

"No, you need not; I will wade the river," said I.

The Prince seemed pleased with the idea, and laughed. "Your legs are long enough to wade an ocean," said he.

I sat down on the bank of the stream, and took off my shoes and stockings, rolling my trousers up above my knees. Then placing my stockings inside of my shoes, and taking my shoes in one of my hands, I arose. The Prince kept his place on my shoulder during the whole performance. I now stepped into the water.

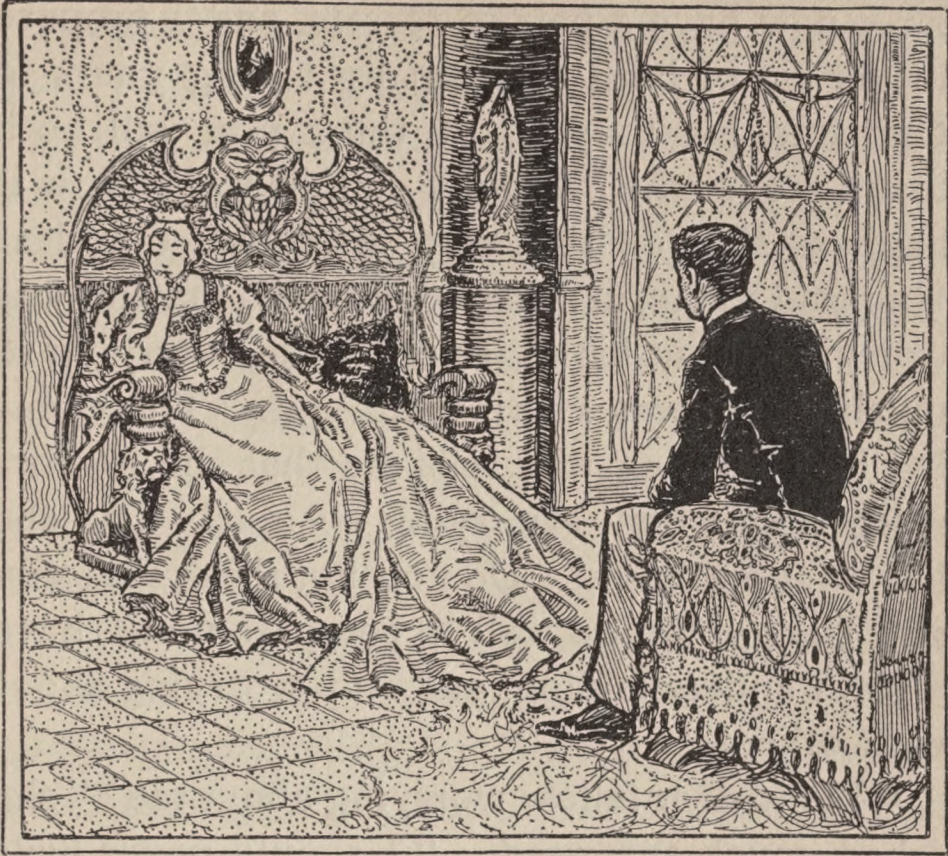
I think all the people of the city were by this

time assembled on the bank to see me cross. The river was not so deep as I supposed, and in its deepest portion did not come quite to my knees. We were, therefore, soon safely over, and, waving an adieu to our little friends on the bank we had left, I put on my stockings and shoes and started for the fairy palace. At its door I was made small again by the Prince, and we entered, warmly welcomed by the Princess Ino, who seemed glad to see us.

She had been waiting tea for us, and we sat down to it, quite hungry. The little lady herself presided gracefully at the head of the table, and poured out our tea with her own hands. It was delicious and refreshing. We had some slices of buttered toast about as big as peppermint lozenges, and some hot muffins.

After the meal was over, the Prince asked me to excuse him for an hour or two, as he had some matters of importance which required his attention, adding that the Princess would entertain me until his return. The Princess then invited me into the library, a cozy little room, and motioning me to a pleasant, easy chair, she seated herself on a little tufted sofa just in front of me.

"I am very glad to have this opportunity, Uncle Frank," she began at once, "of speaking to you alone and confidentially about my dear Uno. He feels the loss of our darling boy so deeply that I am worried about him—sometimes



so much so that I lie awake half the night. You must not let him know a word of this, but give me your best advice."

I remembered what Uno himself had told me, that very afternoon, as to worrying about his lovely wife. "Here is a pretty state of things," thought I. "He is worrying about her, and she about him. This comes of husband and wife not talking freely together. If they only had compared notes they would have discovered that about three fourths of their anxiety was unnecessary." I determined to set them right, and said: "My dear Princess, I am glad you have taken me into your confidence,

for I now have a pair of secrets, and I propose to get rid of both of them by telling yours to Uno and his to you. I think you will both thank me for the breach of confidence. Now it happens that on this very afternoon our dear Uno said to me, in strict confidence, that he was worrying about his charming wife—worrying so much that it was wearing him out. This evening his charming wife tells me that she is worrying about him—worrying so much that she lies awake at night. Do you not think that you and Uno would do well to compare notes, have a plain understanding, and stop worrying about each other?"

"Is the dear fellow worrying about me?" she asked, much surprised. "I should never have suspected it."

"No," I answered; "the dear fellow conceals his anxiety from you with the same unselfishness which has led you to conceal yours from him. Take my advice, my dear Princess, and let Uno see that he is a cause of anxiety to you; have an understanding at once."

"I will this very evening," said she. "This comes from having so wise a friend to consult as Uncle Frank. And now, my dear Uncle Frank, I must ask your advice about the search for my darling boy. Oh, I have so long wanted a friend with whom I could advise and to whom I could speak freely!" she said earnestly.

"And have overlooked that best of all friends, your husband," I replied.

"Yes; it was because I felt the subject was such a painful one to him."

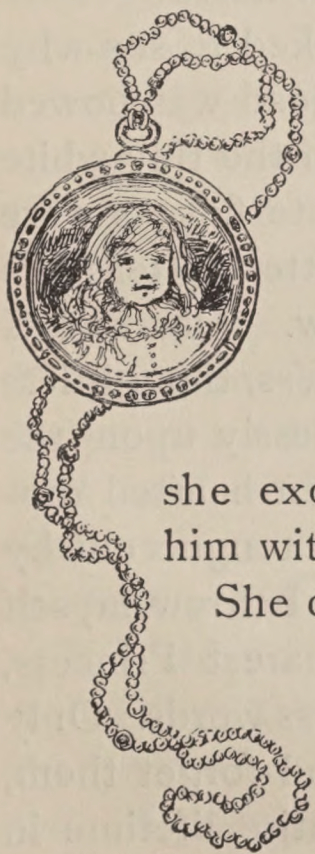
"More painful to him, dear Princess, because he dared not speak of it to you. He speaks freely and manfully about it with me. How can I serve you?"

"Oh, in every way," she answered eagerly. "By helping me to look for my boy. You can do so much!"

"Then rely upon it, my dear Princess, I will do all that I can. Now, be it known to you, I have been searching for him for some time, and I am most glad to find that I can speak freely to you about it, for you can aid me very much. First of all, have you a picture of the little fellow which you can let me see, so that I can recognize him when I find him?"

"Oh, how my poor heart rejoices to hear you talk so confidently about finding him!" she exclaimed. "I have a picture of him with me always."

She drew from her bosom a tiny gold locket, and, opening it, handed it to me. It was the portrait of a beautiful boy, with high forehead, long golden curls,



blue eyes, and a pleasant, smiling face, very much like his father's.

"How like my splendid Prince!" I exclaimed.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, he is like his noble father, not only in looks, but in everything, so brave and gentle."

"I cannot doubt it," I replied. "I see it in every feature. I can well understand why you are so proud of him. It makes my heart ache to think in what unkind hands he may be now. The beautiful curls, which you took so much trouble to arrange so carefully, are neglected now, I warrant me! If we could only be sure that those who have the sweet little fellow are kind to him, how much easier it would be to bear! How old was he, dear Princess?"

There was no answer. I looked to see why she was silent. The beautiful head was bowed down, and the face covered with the tiny white hands, while between the delicate fingers were falling slowly, one by one, the bitter, bitter tears of a mother's love and sorrow. Oh, how I reproached myself for my senseless, thoughtless words! I had trampled ruthlessly upon the feelings of this poor little broken-hearted mother, and I could have torn my tongue out by the roots, in my self-reproach. I threw myself on my knees before her. "Dearest Princess, forgive, oh, forgive my thoughtless words. Only look up and say you forgive and forget them, and I promise to spend my entire lifetime in

looking for your boy. Believe me, there is hope." She sobbed convulsively. "It was only yesterday," I continued earnestly, "I was looking for him, and by morning I will be again at work. I promise you to leave nothing undone until I place your brave boy once more in your arms. Only say you forgive me!"

"I have nothing to forgive you for, Uncle Frank. You are most kind to me, and I appreciate it all, I do assure you; but I am such a poor, weak, heartbroken little woman that I cannot help giving way at times. I thought I could bring myself to talk calmly and deliberately with you, in the hope of finding my boy, but I overestimated my strength. Do not distress yourself, I pray, on my account. It was not so much what you said, but because it was so exactly like what I myself am always thinking, and your words reminded me of my own bitter thoughts and fears."

"Then dismiss such thoughts and fears, my dear Princess, for there is every reason for hope. Indeed, something tells me I shall find your boy before many days have passed over your beautiful head, and I would be willing to spend a lifetime in such a search, if years instead of days were necessary to restore him to you."

If I had had twenty lives to spend in such a task I would have been repaid for them all by the grateful look which the little woman gave me. Under my encouraging and hopeful words



she soon regained her spirits, and was talking cheerfully and calmly when Prince Uno returned.

"I have been very busy and could not come before," said he. "I hope you have not missed me, and that you have had a pleasant evening."

"We have missed you very much, and needed your counsel, my dear Uno," said the Princess. "Uncle Frank is looking for our darling boy, and I wish you had been here to talk with him."

Uno looked in surprise first at one of us and then at the other, as if he could hardly believe his senses or realize that we were actually conversing on the forbidden subject. I understood his astonishment, and said: "Yes; this anxious wife of yours, my dear Prince, has been worrying about you, it appears, and I have at last succeeded in convincing her that you yourself have been wasting a great deal of unnecessary anxiety on her. I now advise you both to stop worrying about each other and to come to an understanding this evening."

He seated himself by her side on the sofa, and taking her hand affectionately in his, said, "And have you really been worrying about me, Ino?"

She smiled brightly. "More than you knew or dreamed, my precious husband; and now I find that all the time you have been anxious about your foolish wife, and but for this good

Uncle Frank of ours we should probably never have understood each other."

It was plain to be seen that both were greatly relieved to discover that they could talk calmly and freely with each other about their great trouble and speak of my plans for finding their boy.

"And what do you propose to do?" asked Uno.

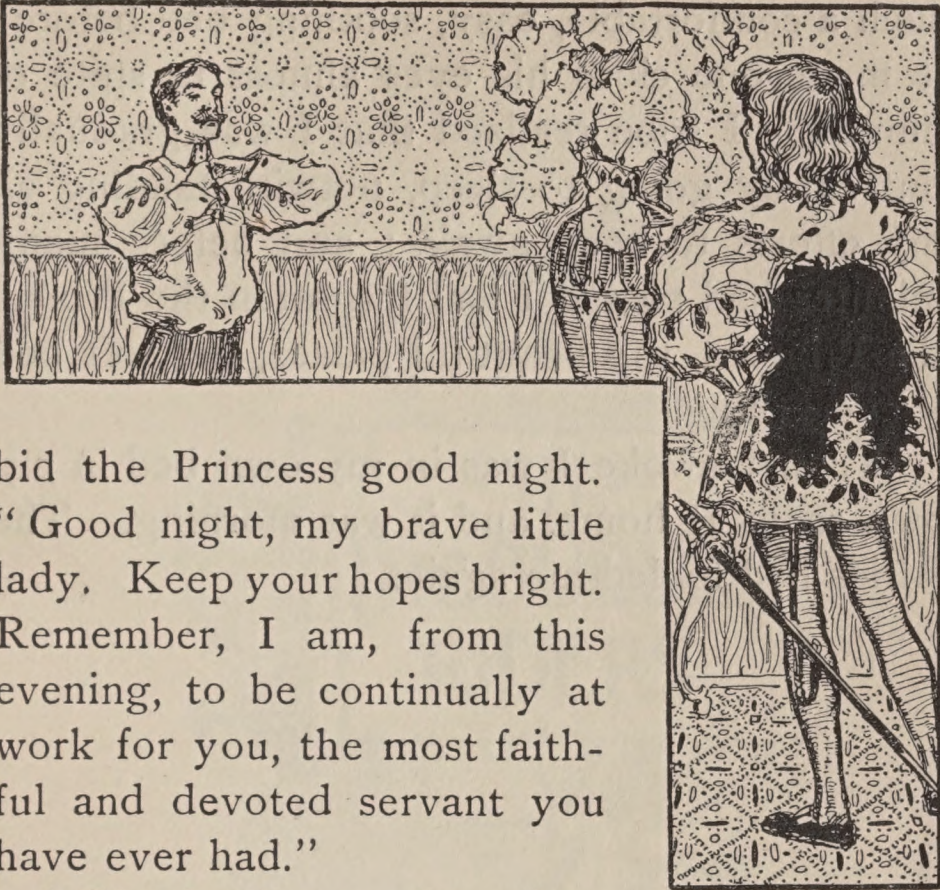
"To begin my search early to-morrow morning," I replied. "I do not wish to tell you my plans, except so far as it may be necessary. I will only say to you, do not worry any more than you can help. Hope for the best. It is now late, and we must not sit up any longer, so I will bid you good evening."

I rose to go, and proceeded to take my leave of the Princess. She held out her hand affectionately and gratefully. Prince Uno, rising, said, "I will show you to your room."

I turned to him and asked, smiling, "Am I to stay here all night, then?"

"I did not say all night, did I?" he replied laughingly. "You are to go to sleep here."

It was evident that I was again to be moved in my sleep. I was not at all uneasy this time, however. It was, after all, a very pleasant and easy way of getting home—much pleasanter than walking through the gloomy woods and cold night air; but I slyly resolved this time to keep awake and see how the fairies managed to move me. With this thought I turned again to



bid the Princess good night. "Good night, my brave little lady. Keep your hopes bright. Remember, I am, from this evening, to be continually at work for you, the most faithful and devoted servant you have ever had."

"Oh, thank you, dear, dear Uncle Frank; thank you ten thousand times. May you only be successful!"

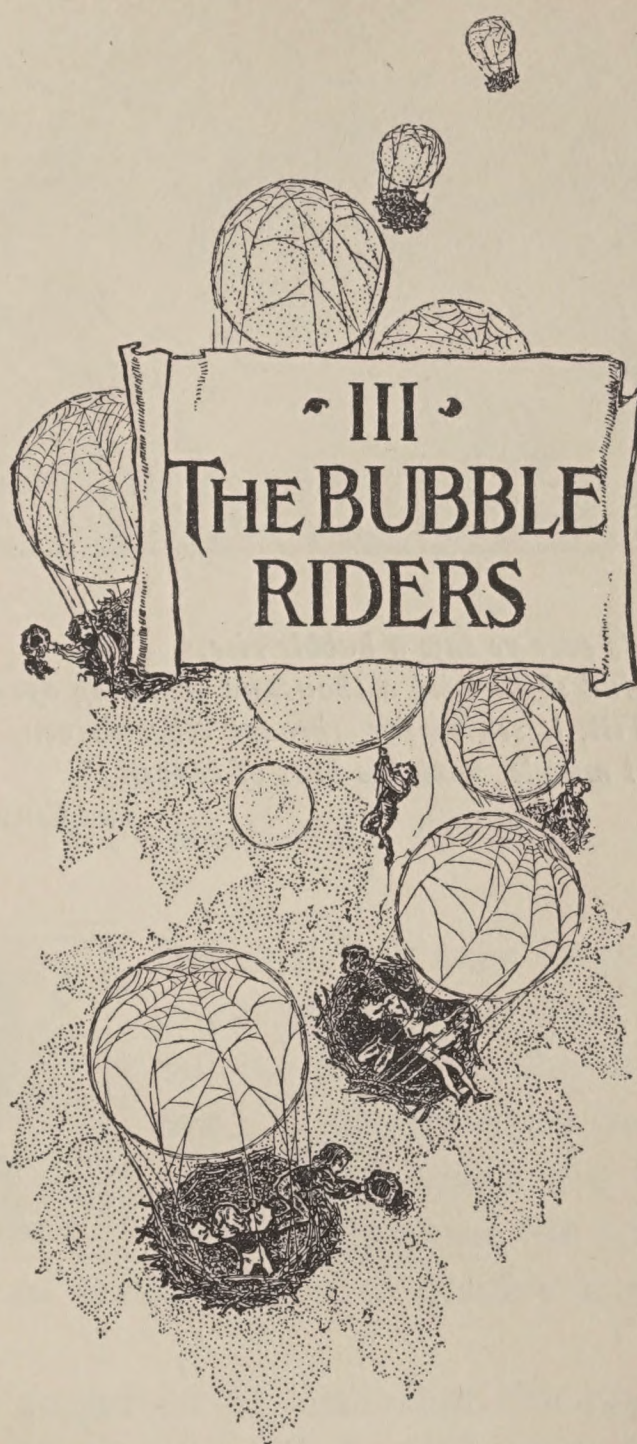
The Prince was waiting for me on the stairs. He conducted me to my room as before, bade me a pleasant good night, adding laughingly, as he closed the door, "You will be called at the proper time in the morning," and was gone.

"Good night, my fine fellow," I thought to myself. "I will keep my eyes open this time; you will not fool me again."

I was soon undressed and in the comfortable little bed. I was tired, and the bed was very soft and pleasant. I tried hard to keep my eyes open, but it seemed as if I had never felt

such a comfortable, easy, soothing bed before; it made one close his eyes almost in spite of himself. I soon realized that I was gradually but surely going to sleep, notwithstanding all my efforts to keep awake; and before many minutes had passed I had forgotten the Prince, the Princess, the beautiful palace, the soft bed—everything.

When I awoke I was in my own bed in my own room at home, and it was morning. The fairies had fooled me again.



*“As ever ye saw a bubble rise,  
And shine with a thousand changing dyes,  
Till, lessening far, through ether driven,  
It mingles with the hues of heaven.”*

THE CULPRIT FAY.



### III

## THE BUBBLE RIDERS



LAY in bed only long enough to collect my thoughts and recall the events of the preceding day. I remembered the assurance I had given the Princess Ino to commence the search for her boy at once, and arose quickly and began to dress.

I was surprised to find that the pockets of my trousers were filled with something so heavy and bulky that the cloth seemed about to burst. I examined them to see what the contents could be, and found a dozen very hand-

some pocket-knives, almost as large as my own, but of much finer workmanship. Where could they have come from, I wondered! At last I remembered the little hardware store in Wee-boro, and that I had purchased a dozen of the knives for curiosities. They had evidently grown larger, like myself, when I was restored to my natural size by the fairies in the night. I regretted the change, but I found them in their present state so handsomely finished, and of such exquisite workmanship, that I was glad to possess them, and placed them in my bureau-drawer, retaining one for use.

After I had eaten breakfast, I set out at once for the woods, for now the thought of finding the dear little boy was never out of my mind. I determined to find the lad who had seen what he thought was a bee flying through the air, carrying what I felt certain must have been the little fairy Prince. After a search of some hours, I discovered him sitting on an old log whittling a small stick.

"Well," I said, "have you found the tree?"

He started at the sound of my voice, not having perceived me until I spoke. Upon recognizing me, he jumped up quickly, and, to my delight, said, "Yes; come with me, and I will show it to you. Do you know," he continued, "I have heard a sound coming from the tree as if some one inside was crying?"

You may be certain I was now very desirous

to proceed at once to the place, and I followed him eagerly, over logs and through bushes and briars, for a great distance. At last, after a fatiguing walk of an hour, we came to a large tree surrounded by some very thick bushes.

"That is the tree, and there's the hole," said the boy, pointing to a small, round hole, about as large as those in which squirrels live, and about five feet from the ground.

"How long is it since you last heard the sound of some one crying in the tree?" I inquired in a whisper.

"Yesterday afternoon," he replied. "I was standing right where we are now."

I listened with the closest attention, but could not hear a sound. Then, giving the boy some money as a reward for his discovery, I instructed him to go away and leave me alone to watch the tree, and not to speak to any one of what he had seen and heard. He seemed satisfied with his reward, and was soon out of sight and hearing. After his departure I concealed myself carefully in the bushes, having first crept as near to the tree as I thought it safe to do, in order to escape being seen by any one going to or coming from the hole. I now waited patiently and quietly to discover sound or sight of the object of my search.

My thoughts naturally turned to all the events of the preceding day. I recalled Prince Uno's sorrow when I first found him in the

woods, and all that he had told me of his long-lost boy; then the visit to Weeboro; and lastly the interview with the beautiful Princess, in her palace, the evening before. Could it be that in the tree which I was now watching was the bright little boy whose loss was such a trial to the otherwise happy couple? What would I not give, how many weary days and nights would I not gladly spend in watching this old tree, if I could be the means of restoring their little boy to them? I remembered all Prince Uno's kindness to me; how forgetful of himself he had been, and how thoughtful of my pleasure and happiness; how generously he had concealed all his troubles, in his endeavors to make my visits to Fairyland pleasant and enjoyable. "The noble fellow shall not lose by his unselfishness," said I to myself, "for he has made me unselfish too, and I will spend my whole life, if necessary, in finding his boy."

An hour passed, and I had heard and seen nothing unusual. The birds were singing in the trees above me, and the bees were humming in the air around me, but nothing went to or came from the tree. Another hour passed, and still another. It was nearly noon. I was growing tired. Perhaps the boy was mistaken; perhaps, after all, this was not the tree; perhaps he had deceived me in order to get my money. The boy seemed honest and truthful, and I could

not and would not believe this. I resolved to be patient and not abandon my post.

Another hour passed. I was growing hungry and began to think of my dinner. Hark! Was there not a sound? Did I hear wee small voices talking together and coming toward me, or was it only the humming of the bees? I listened attentively and breathlessly, and was certain I could hear voices, though I could see no one. One of the voices was peculiar and different from the other, for I could distinguish that there were two of them. It seemed as if the one who was speaking was now passing between me and the tree. This was what I heard.



“Uno himself never weeps, but his little wife does, and I am glad of it.”

“Yes, he does, too,” said the other. “I saw him weeping in these very woods yesterday morning. Oh, he is brave and powerful, but he cannot find his boy!”

I was afraid to

breathe, lest they might see or hear me, and stop talking.

"Oh, how I hate him!" said the one who had first spoken. "I know he regrets the day he ever punished me."

I recalled what the Prince had told me about punishing the Wood-sprite, and I felt certain that that very sprite was standing within a few feet of me, though I could not see him. How exasperating! If I could only catch him, thought I, I would take him to the Prince, and tell him I had heard the villain confess. To attempt to seize him without seeing him would result only in my catching a handful of air, and in letting him know that I had discovered the tree. I felt certain that he would then, so soon as I had gone, move the little Prince to some other place of concealment, where I could never find him. I resolved to wait patiently, and hear all that I could, and then get Uno to help me.

"We must take the boy away from here," said the Wood-sprite. "The fairies have of late been coming to these woods every day, and they may find him."

"When shall we move him?" inquired the other.

"I shall be busy for the rest of this week, and cannot attend to it," said the first. "Be here exactly at four o'clock in the afternoon one week from to-day, and I will meet you."

I listened attentively, but they did not speak again. Finally I heard them coming from the tree; they had apparently been inside while I was waiting. After conversing a moment longer, but in a tone so low that I could not distinguish their words, they passed softly, almost silently, by me, going down the hill.

As soon as I felt sure they were out of sight and hearing, I crept cautiously to the tree, and was on the point of calling to the little Prince inside when it occurred to me that perhaps they had left a Wood-sprite inside the tree to keep watch over him, and that if I should speak to him they would know that I had discovered the place of his concealment and would remove him so soon as I had gone; whereas, on the contrary, if I should say nothing they would not suspect anything; for how should a man be supposed to know about a fairy boy's having been stolen?

Convinced that in finding the tree I had accomplished all I could without further help from Uno, I walked slowly home. "How can I manage to catch the scoundrels?" thought I. "They are invisible; and who can put his hand on a thing he cannot see?" A happy thought occurred to me: the invisible fish-nets I had seen them making in the mill at Weeboro would be the very things for my purpose. "I will go at once to Weeboro, and have the men there make me a large invisible fish-net. I will then spread it all around the tree, just leaving open

the little pathway through which the Wood-sprites must come to take the dear boy from the tree. So soon as they come out of the hole with him, I will draw the net close and catch them all."

Without thinking of my dinner, I set out at once for Weeboro. But how to find the fairies? I felt that I had no time to spare; indeed, I could not tell how long it would require to make the fish-net. I knew that I must be back within one week, or it would be too late. I had, of course, to find Uno before I could get into Fairyland. "What if I should not be able to find him for a week!" thought I, in agony. Not a minute must be lost.

I started out at a quick pace for the seaside bay. On my way through the woods I passed the spot where I had first discovered the boy who had found the tree for me. To my surprise, he was sitting on the same log, with his back toward me, and had a bowl of soap-suds on his knees and a



long pipe in his mouth. He was blowing soap-bubbles, which looked very beautiful as they floated away in the air, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. Although I was in a great hurry, he seemed to be enjoying himself so thoroughly, and was such a picture of contentment, that I could not resist the temptation to stop and watch him for a moment. He was very dexterous in producing the soap-bubbles, which he succeeded in blowing to a large size. Some of them, caught by the wind, which was blowing gently at the time, went directly up into the air out of sight, while others floated along very near to the ground until they were lost in the woods.

As I stood watching them I thought I heard again the merry laughter of fairies. I listened attentively. Could I be mistaken? No; it was the same joyous laughter that I had heard by the sea-shore and in the woods at the leaf-riding time. I looked carefully through the bushes and up into the trees, but, though I strained my eyes until they fairly ached, I could not discover a single fairy.

I closed my eyes and listened. I could distinctly hear their laughter, and thought it sounded nearer to the ground and in the direction in which the soap-bubbles were floating. Opening my eyes, and looking in the direction of the sound, I made a discovery. The boy had just succeeded in blowing an unusually



large and strong soap-bubble. It floated softly out of his sight behind a thick cedar-bush which was in front of him. No sooner was it out of his sight than a dozen fairies sprang out of the bush, with merry shouts and laughter, and running after it, succeeded in catching and holding it. While detaining it, it burst. With evident disappointment they returned to the bush to wait for another. One after another of the bubbles, which they succeeded in catching with great dexterity, burst as the first had done. At last they secured a large and unusually strong one, and before it could break they threw over it a little net, which, upon looking closely, I could see was a cobweb which they had found in the woods. The bubble now tugged hard, first one way, and then another, as if trying to get free; but the little fellows held it by the long threads of the web, and, I could perceive, were preparing to make a balloon with it.

All that they needed for the purpose was a car or basket. I was wondering where they would procure one when a bright little fellow exclaimed, "I have it! I know where there is a basket!" Running to the cedar-bush, he climbed up into its branches. He soon returned, bearing on his shoulders a small birds' nest that the birds had left there from last year. No fairy would take a nest which the birds were still using.

They all shouted when they saw it, and soon had it tied securely below the bubble. The balloon was now finished and ready for a ride. As many climbed into the nest as it would conveniently hold. So soon as they were all comfortably seated the others cut the rope, and away it sailed into the air, as light as a feather, carrying with it as merry a set of little romps as I had ever seen.

I was delighted. The boy had evidently seen nothing whatever, and was still blowing bubbles as before.

The fairies who had been unable to find room in the nest waited for another bubble to come behind the bush. They soon found one strong enough for their purpose, and were not long in throwing a cobweb over it and tying another birds' nest under it as before; they seemed to know just where to look for an empty birds' nest when they wanted one. Away they sailed over the tops of the trees, laughing and singing, as happy as only fairies can be.

I watched them until they became mere specks in the distance, and seemed to be as high as the clouds themselves. While looking at them, the boy, who had exhausted his supply of soap-suds, and who had not observed me at all, rose quickly from the log on which he was sitting, and went home, carrying his bowl and pipe with him. I was all alone, and began to realize that I had, in my desire to see the fairies

and their balloons, forgotten the object of my errand, and lost my only opportunity of inquiring of them where to find the Prince. It was too bad. How could I have been so thoughtless! I was thoroughly provoked with myself for my stupidity, and was about starting to find the seaside bay, greatly fearing that I should miss it as before, when I heard some one near me laughing roguishly at my discomfiture, and, looking carefully about me, I discovered Prince Uno himself observing me intently. I need not say how delighted I was to see him.

"The very person I was looking for!" I exclaimed. "You must show me the way to Weeboro at once."

I think he suspected that I had good reasons for haste, for, without asking for explanations, he told me to follow him, and we set out at once. The stone cover to the staircase was soon reached, and I lifted it as usual, without waiting to be told to do so, and we went down. He turned as soon as we reached Fairyland, and gave me the small bottle to drink from. I was soon of his own size, and we were walking quickly along, arm in arm. He saw that I was greatly in earnest, and asked me no questions.

"My dear Uno," said I, at last, "I wish to ask you some questions about the Wood-sprites and their habits. I am now, as you know, spending my whole time looking for your little boy." The pressure of his hand upon my arm

showed the interest he felt in my words. "You seem to have great power. Could you give me anything that would make me invisible to a Wood-sprite?"

He stopped instantly, and drew from his pocket a very small flask of red glass, with a gold cap or cover, which was screwed tightly on. "I have prepared this for you, knowing that you might need it," said he. "You have only to unscrew the cover carefully and take one smell of its contents, and I promise you neither Wood-sprite nor mortal will be able to see you. Be sure to keep the top carefully closed, so that its valuable contents may not escape."

I thanked him, and placed the little flask in my pocket.

"Now, can you give me anything that will make a Wood-sprite visible?" I inquired.

He seemed to have anticipated that I would ask this question, for I had hardly spoken the last word before he handed me a small box containing a fine white powder.



"If only one grain of that powder touches a Wood-sprite, it will change him so that you can see him plainly; but it must touch him. If he is invisible, of course it will be very difficult to know just where to throw it."

"If I once get him into my net," thought I, "I will know where to throw it!"

"Now, would you be willing, my dear Prince, to lend me that little bottle containing the liquid to make me small, and the powders to make me large?"

He smiled. "Yes, I will do this, Uncle Frank, since you are searching for my boy; but never mortal had such things before."

He gave both to me, and I placed them carefully in my pocket. I now had the flask to make me invisible, the powder to make the Wood-sprite visible, the bottle of liquid to make me small, and the powders to make me large.

Did I need anything else?  
I would ask the Prince.

"My dear Prince, you know I am on very important work, and must not fail. Do I need anything else?"

"You will need to have the royal scepter of the Fairy Kingdom."

While I was wondering what that could be, he took from his bosom the hand-



somest thing I had yet seen in Fairyland. It was a small golden rod, exquisitely carved, in shape not unlike the scepters of kings which I had seen in pictures. In one end of it was set a most brilliant diamond, which in the sunshine fairly dazzled my eyes.

"Uncle Frank," said he, earnestly, as he handed it to me, "never mortal knew what you now know. Never has mortal touched what you now hold in your hand. Oh, guard it carefully as you would your life, and bring it safely back to me when you have finished your task! I trust it with you because I know you are faithful and true. *If you can once place this in my boy's hand, when you find him, he becomes for the time KING OF THE FAIRIES, and Beast and Bird, Fish and Insect, Wood-nymph and Wood-sprite, must obey him.*"

I was astonished. "But suppose the Wood-sprite himself should get hold of it?" I exclaimed.

"You need not fear that; he would not dare to touch it. If you should see my boy you can safely hand him this scepter, though he should be surrounded by Wood-sprites. Their power over him will cease the moment his little hand touches it."

"How wonderful! I will guard it with my life, dear Prince."

"Be sure you do," said he, earnestly. "It has never been out of my keeping before. You



now have everything you need, even for so difficult a task as yours. Do you wish me to go with you to Weeboro?"

I preferred this time to go alone, and told him so. He seemed to understand my reason, and made no objection. I held out my hand to bid him good-by.

"Rely upon me, dear Prince, and tell the lovely Ino to keep her spirits up, for I will yet find her boy."

He pressed my hand, but did not answer. His eyes were filled with tears. I wished to comfort him, but felt that no poor words of mine were sufficient for the purpose. Return-

ing the pressure of his hand, I left him and started on my journey for Weeboro.

I was soon out of the city of the fairies, and had reached the place where I had before taken the Prince on my shoulder, when I bethought me of the powder which would make me large and enable me to get there more quickly than in my present small size.

I soon reached the mountain behind which I had stood with the Prince, and stepping as before on the little hill at its foot, I bent aside the trees on the top of the mountain and once more looked down on the beautiful city. What did I see?

The streets were full of soldiers hurrying to the Square, where they rapidly formed in line, as an army. Sitting on his horse, in the uniform of a general, was the King himself directing the movements of his troops. I was astonished. What could be the cause of all this confusion and excitement? I soon discovered it. At a distance of several miles from the city, and approaching it rapidly, was a still larger army than that of King Leo. I was not long in deciding that it must be the army of the proud little King of whom the Prince had told me, and who so frequently made war without just cause upon the King of Weeboro.

The soldiers of this new army were of the same size as those of Weeboro, but their king was rather taller than King Leo, and was a fine,

soldierly little fellow, who sat upon his war-horse as proudly as any monarch in the world. He turned from time to time to urge his men to greater speed, and was apparently in hope to take the town by surprise before King Leo could get his army in readiness to meet him.

In this he was disappointed, however; for so careful had King Leo been to keep guard over his country that he had known of the approach of the enemy long before his army was in sight. As the invaders approached the town they saw the splendid troops of Weeboro marching steadily and bravely out to meet them.

I was profoundly interested. Need I say that my sympathies were all with my little friends, or that I admired the coolness with which King Leo gave his orders to his officers, who galloped away with them to their respective commands? I was eager to see which army would commence the attack, and observed with misgivings that the force of King Leo was not nearly so large as that of his enemy. I could only hope that he might make up for the difference, however, by courage and skill.

He evidently thought that he would gain by making the attack, for he ordered his troops to advance. They did so steadily, although the cannon of the enemy made sad havoc in their ranks. Three several times they charged bravely down upon the greater numbers of the foe; three several times were they beaten back,

notwithstanding they fought like lions. I could see, even at the distance at which I was standing, the anxious look on the face of my little friend as he ranged his men once more in line, but with the evident intention this time of letting his enemy make the attack.

He had not long to wait, for the opposing King came on, without stopping for a moment longer than was necessary to get his men into line. He was bravely met, and, to my delight, was beaten back. Again and again was he obliged to retire before the courageous army of Weeboro, now fighting at its very gates for home and country, wives and children. They could not keep up such an unequal battle long, however, for so great was the force of the invading King that he was able to bring fresh troops to the attack so soon as those in the front ranks were exhausted or disabled. I could see that the army of Weeboro was beginning to give way at every point, retiring slowly into the city itself, while bravely and stubbornly contesting every inch of the ground.

How bravely King Leo fought, like the lion for which he was named! He seemed to be desperate now, and his sword looked like a ray of sunlight, so constantly did it flash through the air. But what could courage and skill and personal strength avail against such odds? He was forced back, inch by inch, until he was at last in front of his own little palace, where, com-

pletely surrounded by the enemy, he still held his ground, single-handed, with such strength and courage as only a brave man can show when he fights in defense of wife and child, and at the very door of his own home.

It was at this moment that the other King beheld him, and calling upon several of his strongest men to press forward and end the battle by killing the brave Leo himself, the other King soon stood in front of him. They had just crossed swords in mortal combat when a terrible heartbroken cry rang out upon the air. The little Queen had rushed from the palace upon seeing her husband's danger.

I could wait no longer. I had been so interested in the battle that I had not realized the danger of my little friend, or my great strength and power to save him. That cry of agony seemed to arouse me out of my strange irresolution. Raising myself quickly to the top of the mountain, I cried out, "*Stop!*" in a voice which must have sounded like thunder to the little people below.

In an instant, and while they were gazing at my enormous form, I stepped down the side of the mountain, waded the river, and was at the side of King Leo. The effect can be imagined. The soldiers of Weeboro and their brave King knew me at once as their friend, and were now sure of my help, while the invading army were almost paralyzed with fear at seeing so terrible a giant.

I took away the sword of their King and made him a prisoner. So frightened were all of his officers and men that the soldiers of Weeboro had no trouble in capturing them.

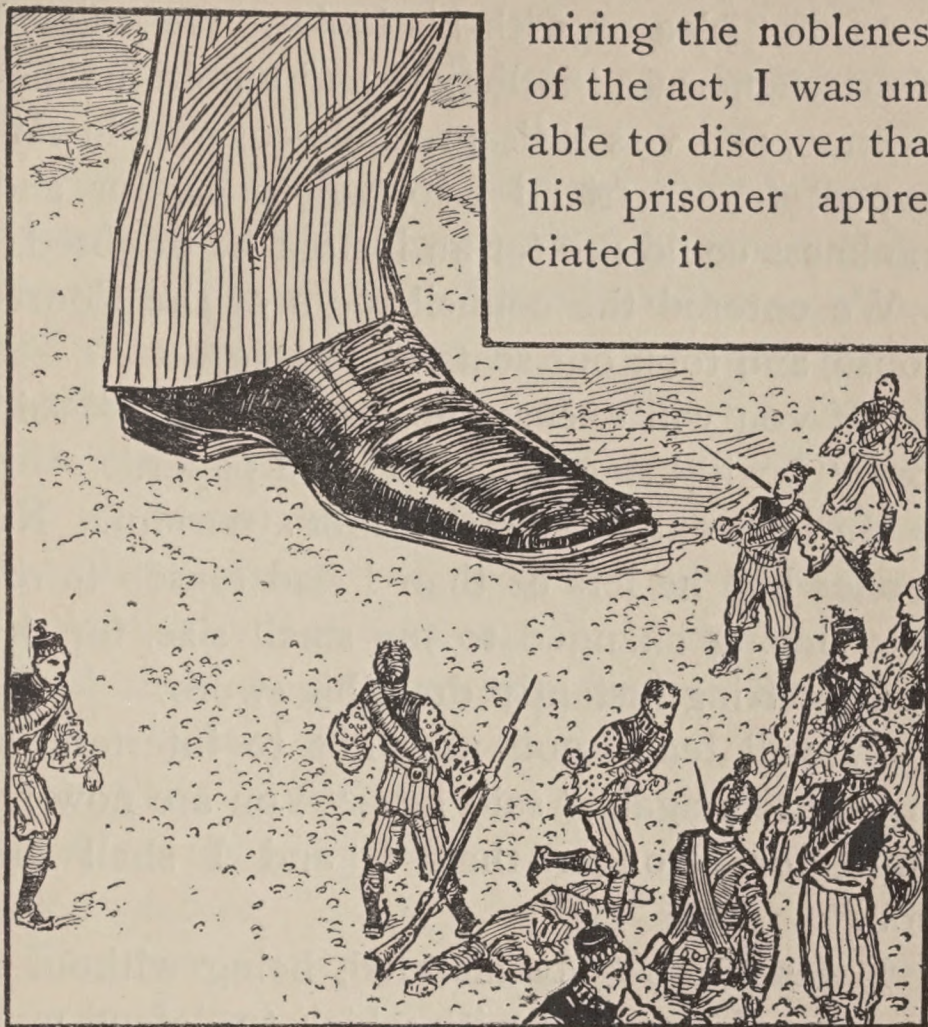
Defeat had been instantly changed into victory. Need I attempt to tell how



thankful the Queen was to me for saving her husband? or how, with tears in her eyes, she tried to express her gratitude? It would be impossible.

All of the guns, swords, horses, and cannon of the enemy, of course, now became the property of Weeboro, and the soldiers themselves, without arms of any kind, were quickly marched outside of the city and placed under guard.

Remembering what Prince Uno had told me about the frequency of these attacks by his vicious enemy on my friend Leo, I determined to take advantage of this opportunity to put an effectual stop to them. I told both of the kings that I desired to meet them in the Court-house, where I should insist on the signing of a permanent treaty of peace. I observed that King Leo had very generously returned the sword of his enemy to him. While I could not help ad-



miring the nobleness of the act, I was unable to discover that his prisoner appreciated it.

It required but a step or two for me to reach the Court-house door, where, desiring to enter with the two kings, I took a swallow from the bottle, and, as I stood waiting for them on the steps, was soon no larger than they; indeed, I was now not nearly so large and strong as the captive King himself. Whatever his surprise, however, he did not speak, and we entered the building together.

As I was now on a level with him, I was able to get a better view of his face, and must confess

I was not pleased with his looks. He seemed of a treacherous, vindictive, and ambitious disposition, and was a disagreeable contrast in this respect to my friend Leo, whose candor and frankness could not for an instant be doubted.

We entered the council-room of the Court-house, and took our seats at a table.

"If you will excuse me for a moment," said Leo, "I will bring pens, ink, and paper."

He went out, closing the door after him. No sooner had he left us than I had reason to regret having changed to my small size, for the strange King instantly drew his sword.

"I will teach you now not to interfere in my matters again," said he. "You are now no larger or stronger than I, and I shall kill you."

I was thoroughly alarmed, being without a weapon of any kind with which to defend myself. Even my penknife was a tiny, useless thing. It was clear I was no match for the warlike monarch with his sharp sword. I felt sure that if he could succeed in killing me while small, I would be as effectually dead as if I were killed by a larger sword while of full size.

He did not hesitate, but started angrily for me, and I jumped quickly behind the table, seizing a chair with which to defend myself. At this moment, fortunately for me, the door opened and King Leo entered. He seemed to understand the situation at a glance, and draw-

ing his sword, attacked my opponent with great bravery and skill, for he was an accomplished swordsman.

You may imagine I was not long in taking advantage of the interruption to get out my powders. In my haste I swallowed two of them, and rose so quickly to my full height that I carried the entire roof of the Court-house up with me, balanced like a hat upon my head, and was once more master of the field. Great was the surprise of the people of the town, who, seeing the roof rise so rapidly in the air, supposed there had been some terrible explosion inside. They were much relieved, however, when they perceived my gigantic head and shoulders rising out of the building like a great jack-in-a-box.

The two kings were now not so high as my shoe, and their swords no bigger than pins as compared with my great size. I took that of the strange King out of his hand and stuck it in the lapel of my coat, and resolved that he should not have it again.

After removing the roof of the Court-house from my head, and shaking the broken plaster from my shoulders and hair, I stepped out of the building, and, getting down on my hands and knees, looked over into the room where the two kings were already engaged in talking over the treaty. After I had removed the sword from the hand of his enemy, King Leo, refusing



to take advantage of the defenseless position of his prisoner at a time when he could easily have killed him,—and he certainly deserved to be killed,—had returned his own sword to its scabbard, and actually invited the little scoundrel to take a chair.

“I shall have to require you,” said he, “to sign an agreement never to take up arms against me again.”

“I will do nothing of the kind,” replied his Majesty, King Vim; for that, I afterward learned, was his name.

“Then, my dear Leo,” said I, “you will not let him return at all.”

This brought the spunky little fellow to his senses. I think he had forgotten for the moment that I was looking down upon them both. At the sound of my voice he looked angrily up at my great face with an expression of vexation at being reminded of the disadvantage in which he found himself which, taking into account the difference in our sizes, was comical to behold. I could not help admiring his courage, for I think almost any other being of the same size would have been frightened out of his wits.

After examining the papers carefully he reluctantly signed the treaty.

I was convinced, however, from the expression of his countenance, that he did not intend to keep it, and felt certain that he was not to be trusted. After observing him thoughtfully for

a moment, I decided to give him a severe lecture.

"You do not seem to appreciate the generosity of King Leo, my friend," said I, "and I have only this to say to you: that if you ever do break the treaty which you have signed, and take up arms against him again, I shall come to your city myself and shall not leave one brick upon another. I shall level it to the ground with a few good kicks, and bring you a prisoner to Weeboro, to work for the balance of your life as a day-laborer in King Leo's coal-mine!"

This terrible threat seemed to have the effect upon him which I desired, for he became very quiet and docile.

The treaty which had been signed was now placed for safe keeping in the vault of the Court-house, and the two kings left the building.

I picked up the roof of the Court-house from the ground, on which I had deposited it, and fitted it carefully on the walls again, so that in the event of a storm the rain could not injure the building.

The two kings walked away toward the army of King Vim, engaged in an earnest conversation which I could not overhear. It seemed to me that King Leo, judging from his manner and gestures, was advising with Vim as if with a friend rather than as with a man who had just attempted his life.

They soon reached the outer gate of the city,

and proceeded to the army of King Vim, which, without arms or horses, was waiting, under guard, just outside the walls. A few steps brought me to their side. King Vim perceived my approach, and, turning to me, said as coolly as if I had been one of his own officers:

“I will now trouble you for my sword.”

I was both surprised and indignant. “Why,” said I, “you are the most impudent little thing I ever saw! Here you have tried to kill, first my valued friend King Leo, and then my poor self, with this very sword; and now you have the coolness to ask me to return it, as though you had loaned it to me as a favor! You have my word for it—and it is a pretty big word for a chap of your size to carry about with him—that you shall never put hand upon it again!”

And I may state here that he did not, for I quietly resolved to take it home with me and use it for a scarf-pin. I saw that it would make a beautiful one, for its hilt was of solid gold, inlaid with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, and the blade itself of the finest blue steel. I felt justified in retaining it, for, by the rules of war, he had fairly lost it in consequence of the bad use he had made of it. It afterward played an important part in this history, but whether as a scarf-pin or not will be seen.

“How am I to get home?” asked King Vim, sullenly, looking up at me out of the corners of his eyes.

"The way you came, crosspatch," I replied. "You don't expect us to send you in a carriage, do you?"

"But I came on horseback," said he, hinting plainly for the return of his horse, for which he was too proud to ask.

"Well, you will go back on foot," I replied; "you will have more leisure and better opportunity for observing the scenery."

He looked daggers at me, but could, of course, do nothing. I could not help smiling at his temerity, however; for I was now so large as to be able to squeeze him to death easily between my thumb and forefinger, and yet he treated me as coolly as if I were no bigger than himself.

King Leo was a kind-hearted man, and was generous enough to give King Vim a horse on which to ride home. I said nothing by way of objection, for I was pleased to see on Vim's face a look which showed that he appreciated the kindness. Indeed, after a moment's reflection, he turned to the generous Leo, and, holding out his hand, thanked him cordially, but said not a word to me. On the contrary, he turned his back proudly upon me, as though ignoring the fact that there was any such person as my great self in existence. With a smile on my face I watched him as he sprang into his saddle and rode silently away, followed by his men in regular marching order. I watched them for miles. He spoke to no one, but, with bowed head, hu-

miliated and disappointed, looked neither to the right hand nor to the left, and never once behind him. They were soon out of sight.



As I was now so very large that I could not with any comfort talk to the King, and as there was no longer any danger in my being small, I took a drink from my bottle, and was soon walking sociably, arm in arm, with him.

When we reached the palace and had ascended the steps I saw that an immense crowd of the people had assembled in the Square. They no sooner beheld us than they cried out:

“Long live King Leo and our good friend Donkey!”

This was the first time I had heard the name of Donkey applied to me seriously. They had remembered the name which Prince Uno had given to me as a joke, and had evidently supposed he was in earnest and that it was my real name.

I could not help smiling, and said, “My dear Leo, your name is a very appropriate one, for you certainly are as brave as a lion; but I hope

that I do not resemble the animal whose name I seem to bear."

"This is too bad," said he; "I must explain to them."

He did so, telling them it was all a joke of Prince Uno, and that my real name was Uncle Frank.

"I am too good-natured to care about it, my dear King," said I; "and since calling me a donkey could not make me one, there is no need of correcting them."

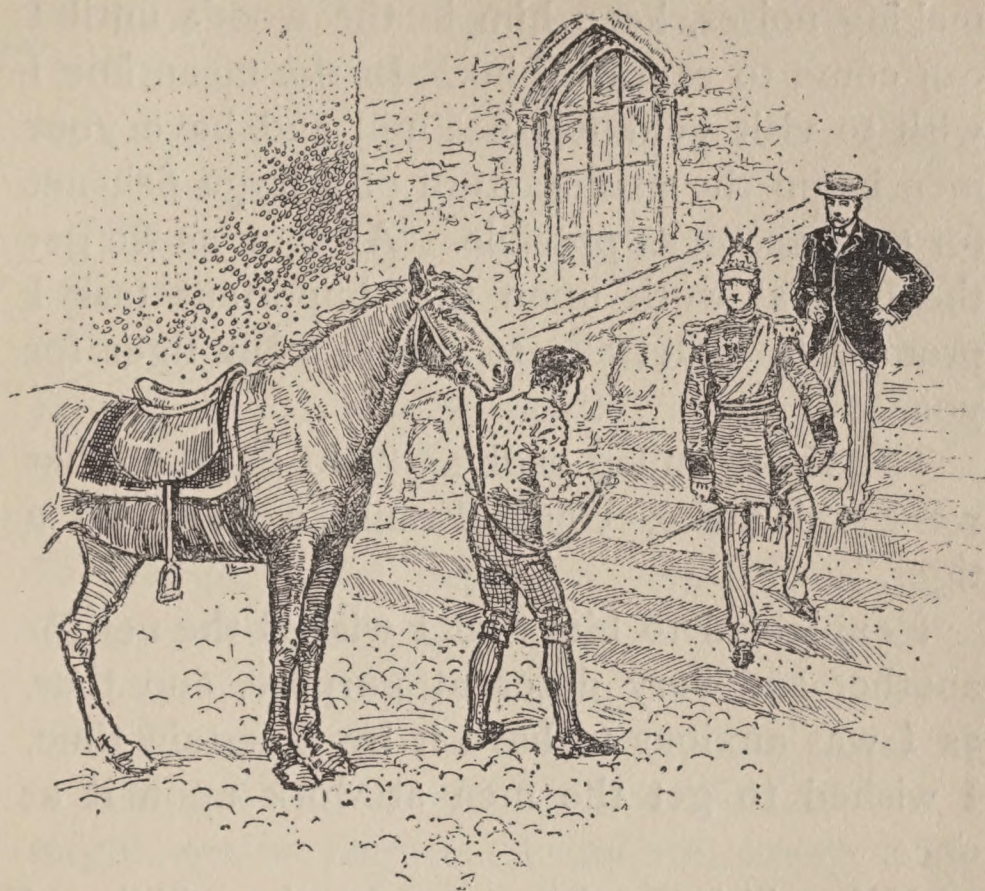
We were about to enter the palace when we perceived a little man, who looked like a farmer, come riding up the street toward us, almost breathless with haste and excitement. He was without coat or hat. We both stopped to hear what news he could bring.

He alighted quickly from his horse, and bowed before the King.

"Your Majesty, an immense tiger is in the woods near the city, and has already killed two people. Will you not let a regiment of soldiers surround the woods and shoot him?"

King Leo's face wore an anxious look. "Here is more trouble," said he. "These tigers destroy more of my people every year than do the wars themselves, I believe. Before this one can be killed at least a hundred of my best men must perish."

I wondered how large the tiger could be, and inquired of the farmer.



“He is larger than any yet seen,” he replied — “fully as long as my horse.”

“My dear King,” said I, turning to Leo, “let me manage this terrible tiger for you.”

He looked much relieved. “I cannot repay you, Uncle Frank, for a tenth of your kindness to me.”

“You can repay me easily for all I have done, my dear King,” said I, remembering the object of my visit to Weeboro and the necessity of commencing the invisible fish-net at once.

“If you will let your regiment of soldiers surround the forest in which the tiger is hiding, they can without danger, by building fires and

making noises, keep him in the woods until I can come to capture him. In the meantime I wish to visit your fish-net mill and have your men begin the manufacture of a large fish-net for me as soon as possible. As soon as we get the men at work upon that important task I promise to undertake to secure your tiger for you."

The King smiled sadly. "No fish-net that we could make, Uncle Frank, would hold a tiger."

I explained to him that I wished the net for another and very different purpose, and that, as I was anxious to have it by a certain time, I wished to get the men at work upon it at once.

"We will instantly set out for the mill," said King Leo, "and I promise you our best efforts."

We walked rapidly, and were not long in reaching the building. I explained to the foreman the kind of net I wished. He listened attentively, made a few figures upon a sheet of paper, and said he could give it to me in seventeen days.

"That will not do. I must have it in six, or it will be too late!"

"He must have it in six," said the King, "if it takes every man, woman, and child in Wee-boro to do it."

"Your Majesty," replied the foreman, "it will take five hundred men to prepare the ma-

terial alone in that time, and another five hundred to do the work."

"They are at your command, from my army," said Leo.

"Then I promise it in six days," replied the foreman.

I thanked the King, and, guided by the little farmer on horseback, started at once for the woods to capture the tiger.

I found it necessary, of course, before starting to change to my large size, and did so. The King explained to the farmer—who, as he lived in the country, had not seen me on my visit to the city—all about my great height, advising him to put a cloth over his horse's head, that it might not be frightened and run away. The man was greatly astonished and somewhat frightened, but under the assurances of the King controlled his feelings, and rode ahead of me in order that his horse might not see me. We soon came to the woods, the man riding at



the top of his speed, and I walking leisurely behind him. He hoped I would not require him to go farther, and, to his great relief, I informed him that he might return, and that alone I would look for the tiger. The soldiers who had surrounded the forest had been keeping watch carefully, and were sure that the animal was still in the woods, as they had heard him growling savagely at intervals of every few minutes, although he was now quiet.

The little farmer was not long in availing himself of the permission to ride to a safe distance, and I at once commenced my search, getting down on my hands and knees for the purpose, and bending the trees aside where they grew unusually close together, in order to look between and under them. Not a sign of a tiger, however, could I see.

I proceeded carefully in this manner for several miles. At one place, where the bushes were unusually thick, I found a little striped kitten. It was one of the smallest I had ever seen, and was beautifully marked. I picked it up. It was quite wild,—I supposed from being in the woods,—but I soon quieted it by smoothing its soft fur with one hand while I held it securely with the other. When I first seized it, it had tried to scratch and bite me, and showed its little teeth in a spiteful manner amusing to behold. I placed it in my bosom, buttoning my coat carefully over it, intending to take it home,



and continued my search for the tiger ; but finding that the kitten was trying to escape by crawling out between the buttons, I placed it in my coat pocket and fastened the flap securely over it. I examined cautiously every inch of the entire forest, but, seeing nothing of the tiger, concluded that he had escaped, notwithstanding the vigilance of the soldiers. Rising to my feet, I stepped back to where the little farmer was waiting for me, surrounded by a number of his neighbors. They were all very much disappointed to find that I had seen nothing of the tiger, but were somewhat relieved to learn that he was no longer in the woods and had probably left that part of the country. I promised if he made his appearance again to return and capture him. Bidding them good afternoon, I started to walk back to the town, accompanied by the farmer, who wished to ask the King to allow a

guard of soldiers to remain near the forest during the night. We were not long in reaching the city, where Leo and a large crowd of his people were waiting to see me bring in the terrible animal. They were, of course, greatly disappointed, and I regretted my failure exceedingly when I saw how badly the good King himself felt. Unconsciously I put my hand in my pocket for my handkerchief, and was reminded of the kitten by feeling its soft fur.

"By the way, I have found a most beautiful pet for you, my dear King," said I. I drew out the little creature, holding it very carefully, for it was wonderfully strong for so small a kitten, and was still quite wild. To my surprise, the little people had no sooner seen the kitten in my hand than they scattered in every direction.

"The tiger! the tiger!" I could hear from frightened lips on every side. Even the brave Leo himself turned pale.

"Hold him tight, Uncle Frank!" he exclaimed. "It is the tiger himself!"

I was greatly amused, and laughed so loud and long that the poor little tiger dropped its tail, laid its ears close to its head, and, trembling in every limb, seemed as frightened at the sound of my voice as the people had been at his appearance. I had actually captured the terrible tiger himself, and held him securely in my hand. Having shown the King and the people how easily I could manage him, they gradually came

nearer to see the formidable monster that had given them such a fright.

The King ordered a strong iron cage to be brought. It was about as large as a rat-trap, and I placed the tiger in it, fastening the door securely. The immense crowd of people that now pressed around the cage showed how great a curiosity was the little animal I had captured. I left them looking at it, and, stepping over their heads, was soon at the side of King Leo, of whom I desired to ask a few questions before returning home.

It seemed best for me to make myself small, and I did so, in order that I might be on a level with him, and thus be able to converse more sociably, as Prince Uno would say.

"My kind and noble friend," he exclaimed, "how can I ever repay you for your valuable service to me?"

"In one way only, my dear King, and that is by having the invisible fish-net ready for me on time."

"It shall be ready on the day it is wanted," said he, "if I have to take off my velvet coat and work in the mill with my own royal hands."

I thanked him heartily.

"May I inquire what kind of fish you expect to catch in it?" he asked.

"I expect to catch the Wood-sprite who stole Prince Uno's boy."

His face and manner changed in an instant

from the gaiety of a moment before to the most serious attention, and, taking my arm, he led me aside where we could be quite alone.

"And are you good enough to be spending your time looking for that dear boy?" he asked.

I replied that I was, and that I intended to give up everything else until I had found him.

"And now, my dear King, when I tell you that I can do absolutely nothing until that net is finished, and that I firmly believe I can recover the boy when it is finished, you will understand why I am so anxious."

"Rely upon me, it shall be ready," he replied. "If I were not sufficiently in debt to you yourself to attend to it, I would feel myself bound to do it for the love and duty I bear the Prince."

"Has Uno, then, authority over you?" I asked in some surprise, although I remembered the respect which the King had shown Prince Uno on my first visit to Weeboro.

"Indeed he has; but it is a pleasure to serve so noble a master," he replied. "Prince Uno is a powerful monarch, and he is as well beloved by all of his subjects, excepting one, as he is powerful."

"I am surprised at one thing," I replied. "I cannot understand why, if he is so powerful, he does not make the Wood-sprite tell him where his boy is."

"He could force the rascal to tell if he were only willing to," replied the King; "but Uno

is so noble and so just that he will not consent to have the Wood-sprite tortured into confession. His argument is that he does not actually know that the Wood-sprite has his boy, and it



would be very unjust and cruel to torture the Wood-sprite on mere suspicion. And so," continued the King, "he will not do an unjust act even to recover his boy. What provokes me is that the miserable Sprite laughs in secret at the sufferings of his noble master, and at the security he enjoys through that master's nobleness."

"If I could only find the boy," I exclaimed, "I would be willing to spend my life in the search. But I must leave you, for it is growing late, dear Leo. Take good care of my kitten."

He smiled. "Suppose you look at the kitten now, while you are so small," said he. "Possibly it may not look so insignificant to you."

I decided to do so, and we both walked over to the cage. The crowd respectfully made way for us, so that we could get close to it. What had seemed a rat-trap to me while I was large was now a great cage, with iron bars strong enough indeed to hold a tiger. Behind them,

his eyes glancing wildly from one of us to the other, his tail lashing his sides in his fury, was a terrible tiger. My little heart fairly stopped beating as I looked into his open red mouth and saw his formidable teeth. As we drew nearer he sprang with his full weight against the bars, in mad efforts to get at us. I am sure he would have made short work of me if he had only been loose. I no longer wondered that the people had scampered in every direction when they first saw him. It was plain to be seen that he was trying to get at me. Could it be that he recognized in my small face the great enemy who had captured him in the woods? I verily believe he did. He made great springs at the bars of the cage, and at last succeeded in bending two of them apart so as nearly to admit of his putting his whole head through. In another moment, it was clear, he would be free. The crowd commenced to give way in all directions, and the King drew his sword to defend himself. I was terribly frightened, but be-thought me of my powders. I swallowed one hastily, and commenced to grow rapidly up, up, up to my full height and great size. It was amusing to observe the effect upon the tiger. He at once ceased his efforts to get at me. His tail fell between his legs, his ears were laid back close to his head, and, trembling in every limb, he showed every symptom of fear. I was now six feet tall, and looked down once more upon

a rat-trap, in which was no longer a great and terrible wild beast, but an innocent, timid, gentle little kitten. I straightened the bars of the cage, and, putting my hand through the door, gently stroked its soft fur.

"How strange!" I thought. "Here my hand is stroking his back with perfect safety, where a few short moments before it would have been torn in pieces. Thus it is with many of the difficulties and troubles with which we have to contend in life. If we permit ourselves to be frightened by them and shrink from our duty, they soon overpower us; but if we rise above them, they grow small and insignificant, and we easily master them!" I fastened the door securely, and turned to bid the King good-by. He regretted to have me leave, and made me promise to come often to visit him. "We cannot do without you now, Uncle Frank," said he. "You are too valuable a friend to lose!"

I thanked him for the compliment, promised to come soon again, and started for the fairy palace, the little people cheering me loudly as I walked away.

A very quick walk soon brought me to the palace. Taking the drink to make me small again, I ran briskly up the steps, and was met at the door by both Uno and Ino, who seemed overjoyed to see me once more.

Tea was waiting, and I was invited to a seat at the table. After tea we spent the evening in

the parlor. At bedtime I was about to retire when it occurred to me to ask the Prince if there was not some way for me to find him whenever I needed him. I reminded him of the difficulty I had experienced. As I was now on most important business, and as it would be very serious if I should not be able to get back to Weeboro on the day the fish-net was to be ready, the question seemed a very reasonable one. He did not answer, but, removing the beautiful little pearl horn with which I had seen him summon the fairies, he placed it in my hand.

"Another of my treasures," he said. "You have only to sound this horn when you need me, and I will be with you in a second."

This was grand. With so many things as I now had I felt that there could be no such word as "fail."

The Prince showed the way to my room, after I had said good night to the Princess. Before leaving me he gave me an invitation to accompany him, on the following day, on one of his errands to do good. As there was nothing to prevent my doing so, I gladly accepted the invitation. Bidding me good night, with a wish that I might have pleasant dreams, he left me.

I undressed and got into the little bed, having first taken pains to place the horn safely in my breast pocket. I determined this time to keep my eyes open in order to see the fairies when they came to move me. It was of no use. No

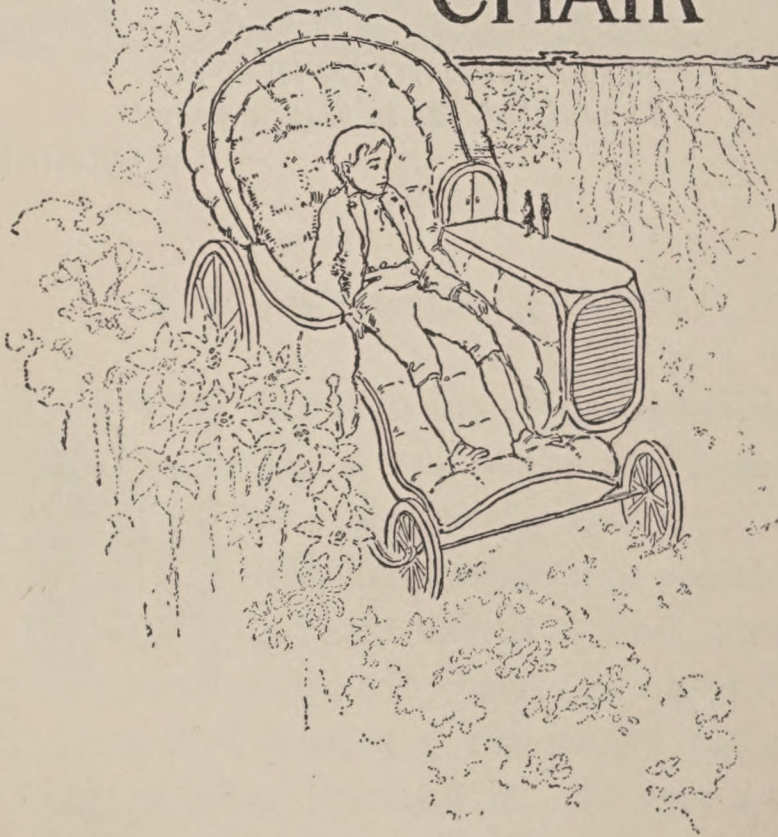
sooner was the cover tucked in around me, and my head upon the pillow, than I began to feel sleepy. My eyes gradually closed, as if the lids had weights upon them, and in a few moments I was sound asleep.

When I awoke it was morning. I was in my own room at home, and my clothes were on the chair by the side of the bed.





IV.  
THE MAGIC  
CHAIR



*“So rose from earth the lovely Fay,  
So vanished, far in heaven away.”*

THE CULPRIT FAY.



#### IV

### THE MAGIC CHAIR



RUBBED my eyes to make sure that I was awake, and happened to look at my bureau. What was my surprise to see the silk necktie which I had removed from my collar the night before badly torn, and with a great sword fully four feet long running through it. It was a magnificent weapon, with a handle of solid gold, inlaid with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. In the end of the hilt was a brilliant diamond as large as a walnut. You can imagine my sur-



prise. For a moment I could not understand it, but I soon remembered having taken the sword of King Vim from the lapel of my coat before retiring in the fairy palace, and having adjusted it carefully as a scarf-pin in my necktie. It had now evidently grown large like myself, and was of the appropriate size for a full-grown man.

At once I bethought me of the little horn the Prince had given me, and wondered if it, too, had grown large like the sword. But no; it was still as small as when the Prince had placed it in my hand. All the other things given me by Uno—the flask, the bottle, and the box of powders—were also of their tiny size.

I now recalled the fact that the pocketful of knives which I had purchased in Weeboro had grown large like the sword, and I decided that the things belonging to fairies never changed in size, and that it was only those of the little people whom I had seen in Weeboro that grew large like myself. I concluded that if King Leo



and King Vim themselves were once out of Fairyland they would become quite as large as other folks.

After dressing, I buckled the sword to my side so that the beautiful handle was concealed by my coat, and went down to breakfast, which I ate very hastily, as I was anxious to meet Prince Uno and go with him on the errand, in accordance with his invitation.

I searched long and carefully for him by the sea and through the woods, and thought it very strange that he had not taken any pains to meet me when he knew I was to go with him at his own request. I was becoming quite uneasy when I happened to think of the little horn. How stupid not to have thought of it before! I

took it from my coat pocket, and, placing it to my lips, blew a soft, clear note such as I had heard him sound upon it. I had hardly time to place it again in my pocket before he stood in front of me, smiling.

“Well, if you are ready to go with me, Uncle Frank, we will set out at once.”

I was, of course, ready, and we immediately started.

“I think, on reflection,” said he, “that you would better make yourself both small and invisible, as I am going where I do not wish you to be seen.”

I took the little flask he had given me, and, unscrewing the top, smelled of its contents. It was very pleasant and fragrant to smell, like some delightful perfume. I fastened the top on again carefully, and replaced the flask in my vest pocket. I was about to inquire of the Prince how long it would be before I would become invisible, when I happened to look down at my feet. I could not see them at all; indeed, there seemed to be nothing between my eyes and the ground itself, for my feet, legs, arms, and my body itself, had entirely disappeared. The sensation was an exceedingly strange one. I could feel myself distinctly, and was conscious of moving my legs and arms with my usual strength, but in all other respects I seemed composed of air.

I spoke to the Prince, but, strange to say,

could not hear my own voice. "Is my voice invisible, too?" I exclaimed.

The Prince laughed heartily. He evidently heard me, though I could not hear myself.

"Your voice can now only be heard by a fairy," said he, "and you can only be seen by a fairy. No mortal eye could now see you, nor mortal ear hear you; and it will be very convenient to-day, for I am going to visit mortal people, and you must be neither seen nor heard."

This was certainly very strange, but, on the whole, I rather enjoyed such privileges.

"You are too large and clumsy," he continued, "to go visiting with a fairy, and must make yourself small."

I could not see what difference it could make, now that I was invisible, whether I were large or small; but I felt in my pocket for the little bottle, and took a swallow of its contents. I suppose it had the usual effect, for the Prince seemed satisfied with my present size, though I could not see for myself.

"You will now find," said the Prince, "that you can fly."

"That I can fly!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he answered; "you can fly, or rather you can float in the air from one place to another, which is about the same thing, or, at least, equally as convenient."

"You surprise me," I replied.

"Well, you might as well try," said he, "and



begin  
now ; we have a long  
way to go, and may just as well  
ride as walk. You have only to will that you  
shall float through the air with me over the trees  
and hills, and we are off ; so do just as you see  
me do."

He gave a light spring into the air, and commenced to go up without any effort whatever. I watched him closely, and, imitating him, found

myself floating as easily as a bit of thistle-down or a feather. Up, up, up we went—over the bushes, over the tallest trees, over the hill itself, until we were, I should think, half a mile high. It was delightful. The birds were flying about us and below us, and we could see far and wide. The Prince turned to look at me from time to time, and laughed heartily at my astonishment.

“Well, how do you like this?” said he, at length.

“I think it is perfectly splendid,” I replied.

I could move in any direction I desired, could go up or down, as I wished, or could sit still, balanced pleasantly in the air, as if upon a bed of the softest down; indeed, I felt that I could have ridden on a leaf from the top of the tallest tree as easily as I had seen the fairies themselves riding on the day that they filled the barn.

“We will talk as we go,” said Prince Uno, “and I will explain to you where we are going and tell you about the people we are to see.”

We floated along easily in the direction he pointed out, and he commenced his story.

“The little boy we are about to visit,” said he, “is called *Lame Will*. He is so called from being a cripple, having been for years unable to walk a step; but he is so patient and uncomplaining, so gentle and cheerful, that he has made friends of the fairies, and to-day he is to receive from me a present which will be more


valuable to him than would be a fortune of money. He was injured while an infant," the Prince continued, "by a fall which hurt his back, and now he has to spend all of his time in an uncomfortable chair, and be pushed about from place to place by some one else, for he cannot move himself. What makes it harder for him is the fact that his father is a poor carpenter and cannot afford to hire any one to push him about; and as his mother has her work to do, the poor fellow has to sit patiently in one place the greater part of the day. Fortunately, he loves the woods. Not far from his father's house is a beautiful forest of pine-trees, whose falling leaves have covered the ground with a soft brown carpet. To these woods, whenever the weather is pleasant, either his father or his mother rolls his little chair; and there he sits patiently, all alone, with no companions except the birds and the bees and the squirrels, the whole of a summer day. They are pleasant company for him, though, for they all know him and are not afraid of him. Even the beautiful humming-birds, the most timid of all birds, will come and sit upon the arm of Will's chair by the hour; and the squirrels bring him nuts to eat, and play hide-and-seek with one another over his chair, as if he were one of them. The honey-bees are great friends of his, too. I have myself seen them bring him honey to eat with his plain dinner of dry bread. So you see,"

continued the Prince, "that, although poor Will is lame and cannot help himself, he has many kind and pleasant friends, and is not so lonesome as one would suppose."

We were by this time floating over a forest of pine-trees, and the Prince, pointing down, showed me where, far below us, a woman was pushing a chair toward them, in which sat a little boy such as he had described.

"We are just in time," said the Prince. "Will's mother is rolling him to his favorite place in the woods. We will go down and make him a visit after she has returned."

We descended gradually and softly until we reached the tops of the trees, and then settled down quietly among their fragrant leaves until we reached the lowest limb of a very large tree near the edge of the woods. The Prince took a seat upon a branch, where he sat swinging gracefully backward and forward in the gentle breeze which was blowing through the forest. Will and his mother were now under the tree itself, and I took a seat on a limb near the Prince, where I could easily see the lame boy's face. It was a pale face; it looked as if he were in pain; but it wore a cheerful smile as he turned to thank his mother for bringing him to the woods. His chair was roughly put together, of wood, and had small wheels on which it could be rolled about from place to place; but it did not look at all comfortable.

A black and white line drawing of a man with a mustache, wearing a suit and tie, sitting in a large wooden armchair. He is leaning back with his eyes closed, appearing to be asleep or resting. His hands are resting on his lap. In the foreground, on the seat of the chair, are two small figures, a man and a woman, standing and looking towards the man in the chair. The background shows a garden with various plants, including a large tree on the left and a trellis with leaves on the right. The entire scene is framed by a simple black border.

“Now I must leave you, my dear Will, with your little friends, and get back to my work,” said his mother.

She stooped to kiss him, and telling him she would come for him at night, left the woods, and was soon out of sight on her way home.

The place that Will was so fond of visiting was, I thought, a very pleasant one. It was at the edge of the woods. Stretching in front of the chair in which he sat was a beautiful meadow filled with white daisies and red clover-blossoms,



into which the bees were dipping for honey. At a short distance from him a large honey-suckle-vine, full of flowers that filled the air with their perfume, was climbing over some rocks, and I could see more than one beautiful humming-bird fluttering over it.

As Will's mother was now out of sight and hearing, the Prince, beckoning me to follow him, floated softly off the limb of the tree down to the arm of Will's chair. It was evident that he made himself visible to the poor boy, for Will instantly looked up, much surprised.

"How do you feel to-day, my dear fellow?" inquired Uno.

It was a full minute before Will could answer, he was so astonished; but at last he managed to say, "I am about the same as usual, thank you; but who are you?"

"I am Prince of the Fairies, Will, and have known you for a long time."

"And he is the dearest and best prince that ever lived, Will!" I exclaimed. "You may be

proud to have such a noble fellow for your friend."

To my surprise, Will did not look toward me, and evidently had not heard a word I had said.

The Prince smiled, and, turning to me, bowed very low.

"Thank you for the compliment," said he, laughing; "but you forget that your voice cannot be heard by mortal ears; even mine cannot unless I choose."

He turned once more to the boy.

"Is not your chair a very uncomfortable one, my poor fellow?" said he.

"Yes," answered Will, a painful look coming over his face as he spoke. "It is so straight and hard, and my poor back is so crooked, that it hurts me very much, especially by the time night comes. I am then very tired. I often wish I could lie down in the clover-blossoms yonder; they look so pleasant. But I must not complain of my chair, for my good, kind father spent many an evening making it for me when he was all tired out after a hard day's work. So I let him think it's quite as comfortable as he meant it to be. Indeed, I ought to be very thankful for it, for many a poor lame boy has none at all."

"Well, my patient fellow," said the Prince, "you have been so uncomplaining that you have made friends of the fairies, and especially of their King, and to-day he is going to give you

a handsome present. He intends to give you a magic chair."

Will looked up as if he did not quite understand the Prince, who stepped to a cobweb tassel, which was hanging out of a cedar-bush near by, and gave it a gentle pull. I heard the distant ringing of the fairy bell, and in a moment more a fairy servant stood before the Prince, and bowed low.

"Bring me the magic chair, Pepin," said the Prince.

The little servant bowed again, and departed.

I think I was now quite as anxious as Will to see what kind of a chair a magic chair could be. I had not to wait long, for in another moment I saw some fairies coming toward us, rolling lightly in front of them a most beautiful and comfortable chair. It was of rosewood, with soft cushions of velvet, and had large wheels and broad arms. One of the arms was so large that it looked as if it might be a box. On the other were numbers of flat ivory buttons with letters printed on them. In front of the chair was a foot-rest which could be raised and lowered. The color of the velvet cushions was a delicate blue. From what I had seen of things in Fairyland, I knew that it would neither fade nor wear out.

"There is a chair for you, my poor boy," said the Prince, "which will not hurt your back, and

which you will find to be very convenient in more respects than one."

"Do you mean that this beautiful chair is really for me?" asked Will, as his pale face lighted up with smiles.

"It is for no one else," answered the Prince, pleasantly, "and I advise you to take possession of it at once."

Poor Will proceeded to get slowly, and evidently with great pain, out of his old chair. I slipped off the arm of the chair to assist him, but was reminded, by finding myself no higher than his shoe, that I had been made too small to be of any use. I observed the Prince, however, wave his hand toward Will, after which the poor fellow seemed to move more easily, and I concluded that Uno had the power of assisting him without touching him and without Will's knowing it.

Will was soon comfortably seated in the magic chair. Resting his hands on the broad arms, and placing his feet upon the foot-rest, he exclaimed, "Oh, this is delightful! It does not hurt my back in the least. How can I ever thank you, good fairy?" said he, turning to Uno, his face beaming with gratitude. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?"

"You have been patient, my dear boy," answered the Prince, "and have borne your trial like a man, without complaining. But you have not seen the advantages of this chair yet; let me explain them to you.

“It will run,” he continued, “of its own accord, without being pushed by any one, and it can be made to go so swiftly that the fastest railroad train could not overtake it. You have only to touch this button marked ‘R’ to start it”—and he pressed upon a button which was upon the arm of the chair with the letter R printed upon it. In a moment the chair began to move, and although it was only running at a moderate rate, I had hard work to keep up with it. The Prince, observing this, motioned me to take a seat by the side of him on the arm of the chair, and I did so. We now began to move more rapidly. The springs were so easy and so perfectly adjusted that we passed over the largest stones and logs without a jolt, and at last, turning about, under the guidance of the Prince we came back swiftly to the place from which we had started. Poor Will was delighted.

“Why, I can now go wherever I please,” said he, “without troubling any one.”

The Prince smiled. “It will go up hill as well as down,” he said, “and across water as well as on land; and this button marked ‘S’ will stop it whenever you wish. You have only to touch this button marked ‘Boat,’ upon reaching the water, and the chair will immediately change into a safe boat in which you can cross the widest river.”

I myself was becoming as interested as poor Will, whose eyes fairly sparkled with delight.

"Oh, was ever such a wonderful chair heard of!" he exclaimed.

"This button," continued the Prince, pressing one on which I could read the word "Cover," "you will find handy whenever it rains."

In a moment a cover of polished leather, like that of a carriage, spread out over the chair, with curtains which could be raised or lowered. The curtain which could be let fall in front was provided with small glass windows, through which Will could see how to guide the chair while thoroughly protected from a storm. The whole was so arranged as to be a shelter from the heat of the sun with the curtains rolled up on all sides, or as a complete protection against



rain by letting them down and fastening them, as occasion required.

"Why, that is as good as a house," said Will. "What will father and mother say?"

"We will not inquire until you have seen more," said the Prince. "These three buttons are for breakfast, dinner, and tea; and as it is now time for dinner, I will press the button marked 'Dinner,' and see what will happen."

In a moment the arm of the chair which, as I have stated, was large and square like a box underwent a curious change. The wooden sides were rolled up like shutters, showing through glass windows a little kitchen. In it was a range or stove, in which I could see a fire burning, and bustling about the room in the preparation of a meal were fairy cooks in white aprons and caps. From the pleasant odors which came from the kitchen when they lifted the covers from the pots on the fire and opened the oven doors, I felt sure the dinner was to be a good one. It was soon thoroughly cooked, and two little waiters came up-stairs out of a small door which opened out on the top of the arm, upon which they placed a small table. They quickly spread a fine white cloth and brought on the dishes, all of which were of the most beautiful china, I think, I had ever seen. They were of different colors and with gilt edges. Everything was as small as when I had taken dinner with the Prince in his palace. The knives and

forks were of silver and the spoons of gold. As soon as the table was laid, one of the tiny waiters bowed to Will, and asked him what he would have. The little chap rattled off the names of the different kinds of meat so fast that one could hardly understand him—"Roast turkey, roast chicken, roast duck, roast mutton, ham or lamb or tongue!"

Poor Will looked as if he thought he must be dreaming.

The Prince seemed much amused, and reminded him that the dinner would get cold if he did not decide quickly.

"Come, Will," said he, "here you are in your own house, at your own table, and don't know what to eat. Try roast turkey."

The waiter started for the kitchen immediately, and soon returned with a tempting-looking plate of turkey, both light and dark meat, which he set before Will. After much bustling about he brought up vegetables of all kinds.

Poor Will could not understand it at all, but sat staring, first at the table, then at the waiter, and finally at the Prince himself, as if he could not believe his eyes.

"Well, I must say," said Uno, laughing, "you are very polite. Here you have an elegant dinner, and you have not yet invited me to dine with you; but I see I must make myself at home or I will not get anything to eat."



He seated himself on a chair which the waiter had brought from the kitchen, and said:

“Waiter, bring me roast duck without any gravy!”

In a moment it was placed before him, and, without further ceremony, he helped himself liberally to everything on the table, and commenced eating with a relish.

“Come, Will, get to work; taste it if

you can’t believe it.”

Thus urged, poor Will ventured to taste the food. My recollections of the meals I had had in Fairyland made me certain he had never tasted anything so good. A mouthful or two of the delicious dinner soon brought him to his senses, and he began at last to realize that he was awake and that it was all real.

“This is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of!” he exclaimed; “and what is strangest of all is that, though everything is so small, whenever I put a mere taste in my mouth I seem to get just as much from one of these little

spoons as I do at home out of one of mother's big ones. Is this delightful chair really to be mine?" he inquired.

"All yours, Will; and you can have supper at night, and breakfast in the morning, by merely touching the buttons I have shown you."

At this moment he observed me. I had been standing quietly by, watching them both in silent admiration.

"Uncle Frank, I declare you must excuse me!" he exclaimed. "You must be as hungry as Will and I, and must have some dinner at once. Here, waiter, bring a chair and take his order."

I preferred turkey with a small slice of ham as a relish, and it was soon placed before me. It was evident that the waiter saw me distinctly, though Will had neither seen me nor heard a word I had said.

We had ice-cream for dessert, after which almonds and raisins were brought in, with some red apples about as large as currants.

As soon as dinner was over the little waiters cleared the table and shut up the kitchen; the little shutters were rolled back, and everything was as dark as before.

Will leaned back in the chair, while tears of pleasure rolled down his cheeks. "This is too good to believe!" he exclaimed. "I am so afraid I shall somehow wake up and find it all a dream."



"Let me give you a good pinch and show you that you are awake," said the Prince, laughing. "Now let me explain the rest of the buttons to you."

"What, are there any more?" asked Will.

"You will think so before I get through," replied the Prince. "When you wish to go to sleep at night, you can change the chair into a comfortable bed by touching this button."

In a moment the chair opened out into a comfortable, soft bed.

"How delightful!" exclaimed Will. "Why, that is no trouble at all."

"When you wish anything, no matter what it is, so long as it is anything you ought to have, you must press down this button"—and he touched a button marked "X." As he did so a little drawer opened; in it were a slate and pencil.

"You have only to write the name of what you wish upon the slate," said the Prince, "and close the drawer. After waiting a moment you can open the drawer, and you will find then exactly the amount of money—neither more nor less than just enough—to purchase what you wish. You must not be unreasonable or foolish in your requests," he continued, "and if you find no money in the drawer, you may be sure that you have not asked wisely. Be very sure never to ask for money itself," he added, "for the love of money merely for the

sake of possessing it, and not for what it will buy or the good it will do, is a very low and mean passion.

"And right here, Uncle Frank," said the little fellow, turning to me, "do you know, it always seems so strange to me that men who have enough to eat and wear, and every needed comfort, should be continually striving to heap up wealth, when all the money in the world can buy them no more.

"If you ever get into trouble, Will, and need my help, you have only to pull this little bell-rope, and I shall come to you at once."

"I shall want to see so kind a friend very often," said Will, "and fear I may trouble you too much."

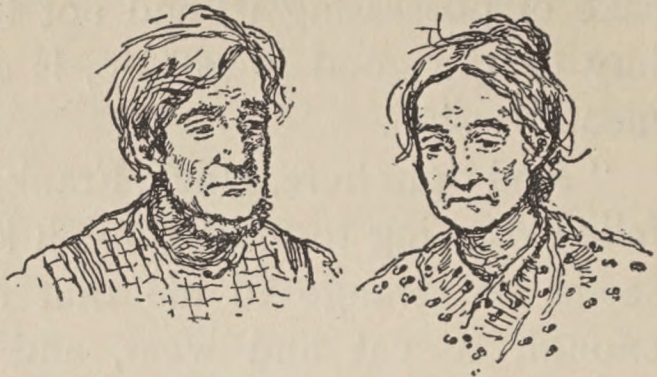
"You must not ring for me unless you need me," said the Prince, kindly but seriously, "for I have much to do and little time to spare."

Will promised to be careful, and inquired, "Are the little waiters and cooks always in the kitchen?"

"Not always," answered the Prince, "but you will always find them there when you need them. One advantage about them is," said he, smiling, "that they will never charge you any wages."

"I declare," said Will, examining the chair with satisfaction, "I would not change places, while I have this chair, with the strongest and healthiest boy in the world."

The Prince seemed particularly pleased at this, and looking over at me, smiled.



“What, not even to be well and strong again?” he asked.

“No; I would rather have this splendid chair.” He seemed thoughtful for a moment, and then asked, “Can I have my father and mother and little sister take their meals with me?”

“No,” replied the Prince, seriously; “no human being must ever see your little kitchen or your fairy servants; you will have to eat by yourself.”

“Then I can never eat at all,” said Will, sadly. “I could not be so selfish as to have such splendid food when those I love best are living on dry bread and cold water. You must not think me ungrateful, good fairy, if I give up my beautiful chair. I know you would not if you knew what a trial it is for me to go back to the hard, uncomfortable one in which you found me.”

The poor boy was getting slowly and painfully out of the soft cushions to return to the chair his father had made for him.

“I am just as much obliged to you,” he continued, “as if I accepted your splendid gift.”

I looked at the Prince. A tear was in his eye, and he seemed to hesitate a moment as if to make sure that Will really intended to give up the chair. Then putting out his hand to prevent his leaving it, he said: "Keep your chair, my poor boy; you need not give it up. I felt sure you would not be so selfish as to live a life of ease and enjoyment when your good father and mother and little sister were poor and needy. I am pleased to discover your nobleness of heart. Keep the chair, and let them share its comforts with you. You must promise me, however, that no one else shall ever know of your kitchen."

Will was once more happy, and sank back in the soft cushions with a smiling face. "You are so good," he exclaimed, "that it overcomes me."

The Prince himself seemed gratified, and said, "We will now try a ride in the chair, Will, and see what it can do."

He motioned to me to take a seat upon one of the arms, and sprang lightly himself upon that containing the buttons. We were no sooner seated than he touched the button marked "R," and the chair commenced to move. It ran

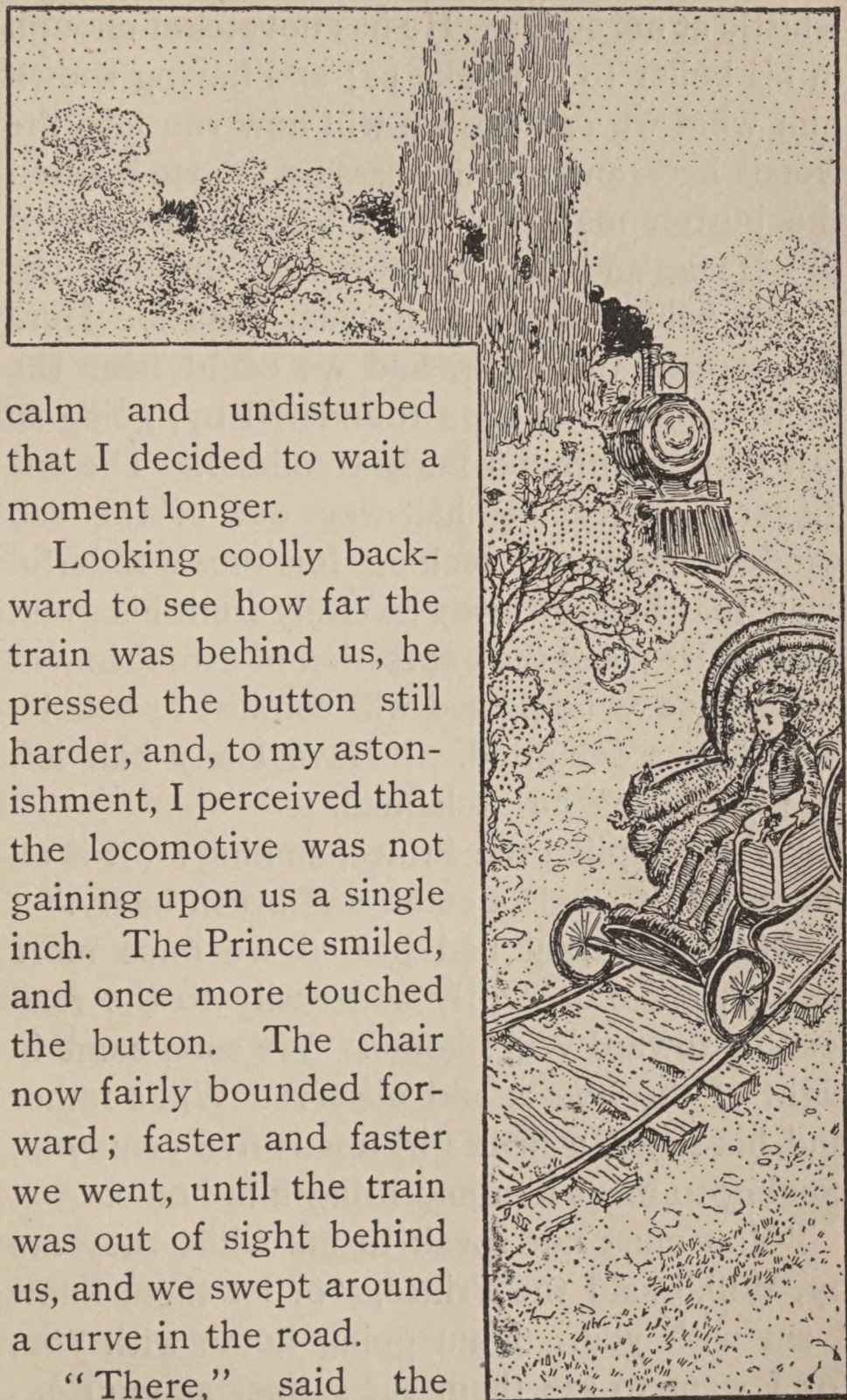


swiftly out of the woods and across the meadow, at one place jumping easily and lightly over quite a large stone, until we came to a steep hill, the sides of which were very rocky and almost perpendicular. I expected to see the Prince stop the chair or change its course; but he did not, and, to my surprise, it ran easily up the side of the hill, carrying us safely to the top. I certainly thought it the most wonderful chair I had ever heard of. We ran easily down the opposite side of the hill until we came to a railroad track. I could hear a train of cars coming in the distance, and wondered if the Prince would cross the track in front of the engine or wait for the train to pass. We had no horses to be frightened, that was one comfort, I thought. To my surprise and alarm, he ran the chair right upon the track itself, and pressed down hard upon a button which I had not observed before, on which was marked "R. R." This, he explained, stood for railroad. To my surprise, the wheels of the chair now adjusted themselves so as to fit the two iron rails of the track, and the chair commenced to run rapidly in the same direction as that in which the train behind us was coming. I began to get very nervous, feeling we would certainly be overtaken; indeed, the locomotive soon came in sight, and the engineer commenced to ring the bell and blow the whistle. I was preparing to jump off when I happened to look at the Prince. He sat upon the arm of the chair, so

calm and undisturbed that I decided to wait a moment longer.

Looking coolly backward to see how far the train was behind us, he pressed the button still harder, and, to my astonishment, I perceived that the locomotive was not gaining upon us a single inch. The Prince smiled, and once more touched the button. The chair now fairly bounded forward; faster and faster we went, until the train was out of sight behind us, and we swept around a curve in the road.

"There," said the Prince; "I guess that engineer will not ring his bell or blow his old



whistle at me again. He has not steam enough in his boiler to overtake us; and having shown him what we can do, we will now run into the woods here, and see him pass by." He pressed the button marked "R." The chair jumped the track, and was soon rolling through the woods behind some thick cedar-bushes. Here he stopped the chair, and we could hear the train coming. It soon thundered by, going so fast that the ground fairly trembled. The engineer was leaning half-way out of the cab window, evidently looking for the wonderful chair that had run away so easily from his great locomotive; and the expression of astonishment on his face as he passed was comical to behold.

Will was delighted. "Have I any hair left on my head?" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied the Prince, smiling; "it is all there, but it needs a comb and brush badly."

After the train had passed we once more started, and ran swiftly and easily to the road leading toward Will's home. We soon came in sight of the house, and observed Will's father and his sister, a little girl about five years old, coming to meet him and bring him home.

"You must not speak to me while they are by, Will," said the Prince, "or let them know I am with you. I am going home with you, for I want to see them eat supper at your expense."

"Why, they will see you easily enough with-

out my telling them," exclaimed Will, in surprise.

"No; they will not," answered the Prince. "I shall be invisible to all except yourself."

Will seemed still more surprised at this information, but promised to obey Prince Uno's request.

By this time we had reached Will's father and sister, and the chair stopped.

His father was an elderly man, with slightly gray hair and an honest, good-natured face. His sister, whose name was May, was a chubby little girl with bright brown eyes and brown hair and rosy cheeks. They were both greatly astonished to see Will in his new chair.

"It is a magic chair," said Will, his eyes brightening as he spoke. "Lift May up to ride with me. Oh, father, it is a wonderful chair, and it will take me all night to explain it to you."

The Prince looked over at me from his arm of the chair, and winked in his pleasant way, evidently enjoying their surprise and the poor boy's satisfaction, as, indeed, I did myself, immensely. It was doubly pleasant that we could see and hear all that was going on without being ourselves seen.

"Come, May," said Will, "and jump up here beside me, and I will give you a ride."

Her father assisted her into the chair, where she sat on the cushion beside Will, the chair being easily large enough for both. Once



comfortably seated, she folded her little plump hands complacently in her lap, and seemed as delighted as was Will himself when the chair commenced to roll easily and slowly along by the side of their father, who was, as may be supposed, greatly astonished, and asked Will where he had found it.

“The best fairy in the world gave it to me,” said Will; “and it has an umbrella-top, and a boat, and a kitchen, and dinner and breakfast and supper, and a bed, and a gold tassel, and a railroad button, and can beat a locomotive, and I cannot begin to tell you all!”

Again the Prince winked at me, and laughed heartily but noiselessly.

We were not long in reaching the house, and Will's mother appeared at the door. To her surprise, the chair rolled easily up the stairs and into the kitchen. But what was the sur-

prise of all when Will asked them to fasten the door, and then, touching the "Supper" button, showed them the tiny kitchen, with its range and cooks and waiters and the table and dishes. Little May stood with her hands clasped behind her, looking through the windows into the kitchen, and watching every movement within. The dishes, knives, forks, and spoons were especially interesting to her. She supposed the waiters themselves to be dolls, and Will had hard work at first to keep her from taking them in her hands as they came up-stairs to set the table. They seemed to understand her mistake and to be greatly amused by it. She soon found out that she was not to touch them, and was content to stand quietly and look on without meddling.

I will not take up your time or mine with telling how Will's father and mother were delighted with the wonderful and princely gift, nor how at the supper-table little May could hardly keep her attention upon the food, so interested was she in examining all that she saw. It was a pleasant sight, and the Prince and I enjoyed it greatly. After supper Will explained to them the wonderful slate and drawer.

"We will try never to ask for anything foolish or unreasonable," said his father. "I am very well satisfied," he continued, "and need nothing myself, now that you are so happy and comfor-

table, my dear boy; but your good mother is not strong, and I do not think it an unreasonable wish to ask for sufficient money to hire a servant to do the heavy work for her."

"You shall neither of you work any more," said Will, "for you have both worked hard all your lives, and I ought now to support you. Mother shall have a servant at once."

He pressed the button, and the drawer opened. "Money to hire a servant," he wrote upon the slate, and closed the drawer.

When he opened it, sure enough, he found a month's wages for a servant.

"Is n't this splendid!" shouted Will. "Money for a brand-new dress—you know you need one, mother."

He wrote the request, and again closed the drawer, and again he found money.

"I do not know how much money it requires, mother; is that enough?" he asked, handing her the amount.

"It is enough to buy me a nice muslin dress—just such a one as I need," said his mother.

"A muslin dress!" exclaimed Will; "that's not half good enough for the best of mothers!" And he wrote again upon the slate a request for "a splendid satin dress."

Again was the drawer opened, but this time there was no money. Will's face turned pale.

"It is out of order," he exclaimed in dismay, "and will not work any more!"

"No," said his mother; "that was a kind and well-meant wish, Willie, but not a wise one. What do I want with a satin dress, my dear boy?"

"Sure enough," said Will; "it was I who was out of order, after all, and not the chair."

The Prince looked at me, and laughed again quietly.

"But, mother, I think a satin dress would be none too good for you, all the same," said Will.

"Write to him for a doll for me," said May, who had been watching very attentively everything that had passed.

They all laughed heartily.

"I wonder if that would be unreasonable?" asked Will.

"Why, no, Willie," said May; "every little girl 'cept me has a doll."



"So they do," said Will; "well, we will try. The Prince is good-natured, and will not get angry if I make a mistake once in a while." And he wrote upon the little slate: "A doll for May."

The little girl watched the drawer eagerly, clasping her dimpled hands together in her anxiety as to the result. I saw Prince Uno smile pleasantly, and stepping toward the drawer, touch it with his hand. He was evidently invisible to Will himself now, as well as to the rest, for I could tell by the expression on Will's face that he did not see him.

In a moment the drawer was opened. This time there was no money in it, but I was surprised to see that the drawer itself had grown larger, and in it was the most beautiful doll I think I have ever seen. It had long flaxen curls of real hair, and blue eyes that would open and shut. It was beautifully dressed, also, and in the drawer with it was a small trunk, having a lock and key, and filled with extra clothes.

"Oh, but is n't he a dear, good fairy, Willie!" exclaimed the happy little creature, clapping her hands in her delight.

I thought so too, and nodded my head in approval as I looked over at the Prince, who seemed to enjoy May's good opinion of him more than any compliment he had yet received.

"You have not asked for anything for yourself, Will," said his mother.

"Oh, have I not everything in possessing the

chair itself?" said Will. "I cannot think of asking for anything more."

"Well, then, my happy boy, it is time we were all going to bed. You will have to leave your chair down-stairs for the night. It is too heavy to carry up to your room."

"Is it, though?" said Will. "It will go upstairs itself, and carry me with it!" In a moment more he was rolling up the stairs to his room.

"Now, mother," he exclaimed, as soon as he had reached his room, "see what a splendid bed it will make!" He touched the button. It opened out at once, and needed only the sheets and coverlet, which his mother soon brought, to make him comfortable for the night.

Will's face wore an anxious expression as his mother turned to kiss him good night. "Mother, I am so worried," he said.

"What are you worried about, my boy?"

"I am afraid it is all a dream, mother, and that in the morning I shall wake and find my beautiful chair gone. Are you sure you are awake, mother?"

"Yes, my boy," said she, smiling cheerily. "I am sure I am awake, and that it is not a dream, though it is all very wonderful. I feel certain you will find the chair all right in the morning."

"I wish I could keep awake and watch it," said Will.



The Prince, who had, I think, been perfectly invisible to Will from the moment he had entered the house, now stepped lightly upon the boy's shoulder, and whispered something in his ear. Will smiled. "You are right, mother; it will be here in the morning, and it is not all a dream."

The Prince beckoned to me to follow him. Tears stood in his eyes, but they were not tears of sadness. He led the way silently down-stairs and out of the house, and for a long distance on our road through the air, as we floated side by side on our way home, he spoke not a word.

At last I spoke to him: "You have made that poor boy happy for the rest of his life, my dear Prince."

"Did I not tell you, Uncle Frank, that to do good always makes one happy?"

"You did indeed," I replied; "but I never understood it so well as now."

We floated on in silence for some distance farther, and at last came in sight of my house.

"You will spend the night with me, I am sure, dear Uno."

"No; I cannot, Uncle Frank. Many thanks to you, all the same. Ino would miss me."

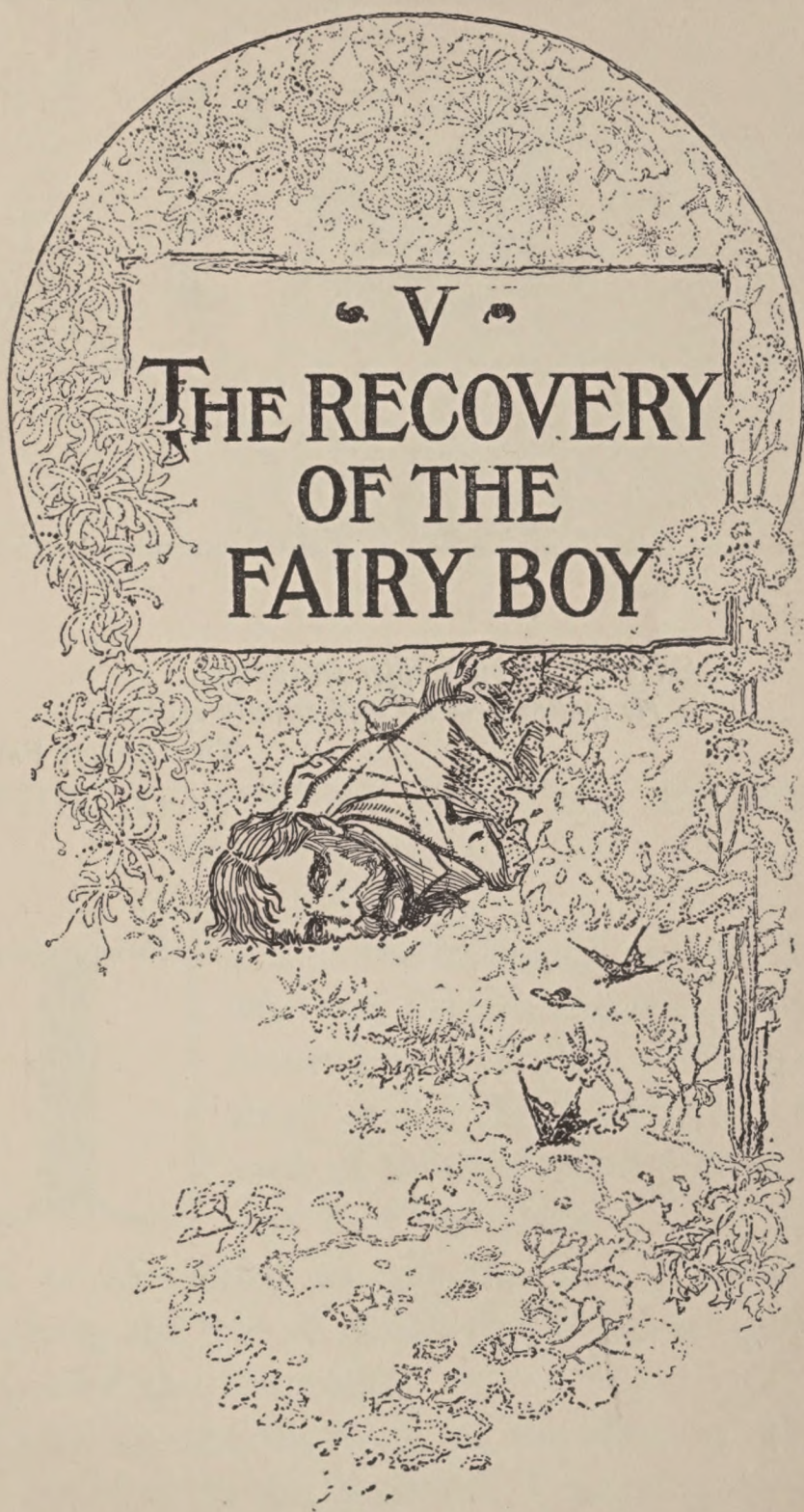
"She knows you went with me," I urged, "and will understand it. I will give you a good bed, and promise that you shall not be disturbed in the night, either." I looked slyly at him and laughed.

He smiled good-naturedly. "You would treat me better than I treat you, I have no doubt," said he. "You would find, however, that, small as I am, you could not move me as easily as I did you. But I must say good night. Come soon to Fairyland, my dear fellow; we are always glad to see you."

"Good night, dear Prince, and best of fairies," I replied. And before the sound of the last word had died away in the air he was gone.

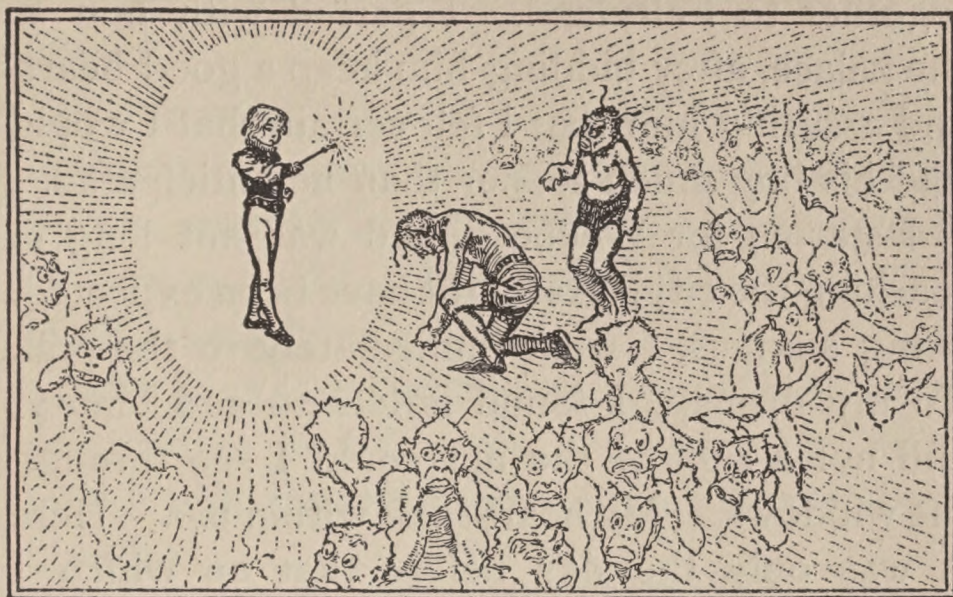
I floated softly down to the door of my house, made myself large and visible, and entered with my night-key. I went quietly to my room, and sat for some time in deep thought, recalling all the events of a delightful day spent with the most delightful being I had ever known.





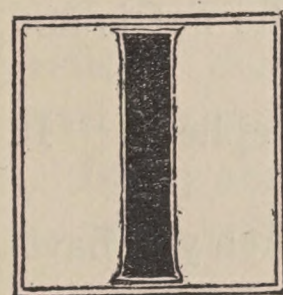
*“He waved his scepter in the air,  
He looked around and calmly spoke.”*

THE CULPRIT FAY.



## V

### THE RECOVERY OF THE FAIRY BOY



SPENT the following day on a trip with the Prince, and will at some future time, possibly, tell you the story of it. The day after, and each of the intervening days before that on which I was to return to Weeboro to get the net, I spent in watching the tree in which the Wood-sprite had concealed the fairy boy.

Early on the morning of the day on which the net was to be finished, I hurried to the seaside wood and blew upon the fairy horn. Prince Uno was quickly at my side. We went

together to Fairyland. I parted with him at the palace, after bidding him keep a good heart, and assuring him that I felt certain that I would find his boy much sooner than he anticipated.

I started for Weeboro, and was not long in reaching the city. As might have been expected, being anxious, I went immediately to the mill. To my dismay, I found it locked and empty, and not a sign of the net could I see through the windows. My heart sank within me. Here it was only the day before that on which I should need it, and evidently not a thing had been done toward finishing it. Almost overcome with anxiety and disappointment, I hurried to the palace of King Leo. He was just coming down the steps, and, as he saw me, held out both hands and greeted me cordially.

"My dear, dear King," I exclaimed impatiently, "the day has come, and the net is not finished!"

"I beg to differ with you!" he replied. "It is all ready and waiting for you."

"Oh," said I, much relieved, "then you have taken it out of the mill?"

"No; it is in the mill, and we locked the doors, that nothing might happen to it."

"Impossible," I replied, "for just this moment I looked in through the windows, and could see not a sign of it."

He looked at me in surprise. "Why, what did you order?" he exclaimed.

"An invisible net," I replied, somewhat annoyed.

"Precisely," said he; "and if it was to be an invisible net, pray tell me how you could expect to see it by looking through the windows?"

Sure enough. How stupid I had been! I drew a long breath of relief.

The King laughed heartily at me, and I was so gratified to find that the net was ready that I joined him cheerfully in laughing at my stupid blunder.

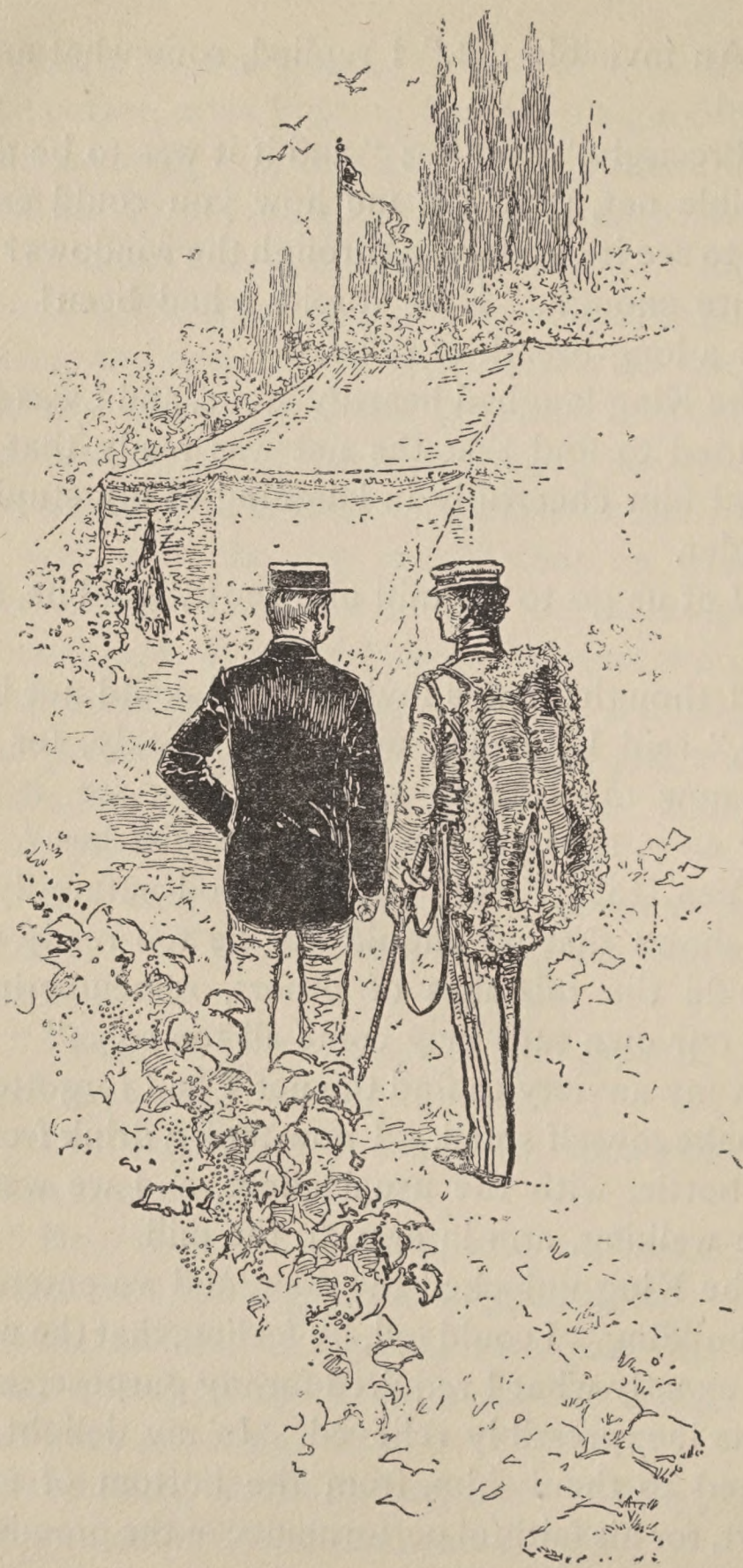
"Let us go to the mill and see it," said he, at last.

"I thought it was invisible and could not be seen," said I, turning upon him quickly, for it was now my turn to laugh. "You see, it is very easy, my dear Leo, to make mistakes."

"Yes, Uncle Frank," said he, good-naturedly; "it shows that we should not be too ready to ridicule the mistakes of others, remembering that our own turn may come all too soon."

In my anxiety to find the net I had forgotten to make myself small. I now took a drink from my bottle, with the usual effect, and we were soon walking, arm in arm, to the mill.

The King unlocked the door, and we entered the building. I could tell, by feeling, that the net was exactly what I required for my purpose, and I was inexpressibly relieved. In my delight, I turned to thank him, from the bottom of my heart, for his faithful performance of the promise.



"You shall have the greater satisfaction, however, of knowing by to-morrow, my dear Leo, that you have been the means of restoring to our dear Prince his bright little boy."

He was delighted, and shook my hand warmly. "How kind of you to say so, Uncle Frank! The moment that I realize it will be the happiest of my life. When do you commence the task?"

"I can do nothing until to-morrow morning," I replied.

"Then you can spend the whole of to-day with me, and I will consider it a great treat. I will see that you have a pleasant time. And now, to begin, what would you like to do?"

I did not know, but proposed a walk; we set out, arm in arm.

"By the way, what have you done with my kitten?" I inquired.

"Oh, it is on exhibition at a circus which is now in town. Would you like to see it? They have quite a menagerie of wild animals."

I was pleased with the suggestion, and we started immediately for the tent—a large one with three poles, on each of which a flag was flying. It was at some distance up the street on which we were walking. A walk of half an hour brought us to the door, however, where I found we had nothing to pay, as the King had the right to enter, free of charge, to all of the shows which came to town, and to take any of

his friends with him. Once inside the tent, I saw a large ring, covered with sawdust, in which the performance had already commenced. Ranged around the ring were seats, rising one above the other almost to the top of the tent. Nearly every seat was occupied, the little people having come in crowds to see the circus, which was an unusually good one. I enjoyed it all very much. The horses were handsome and well trained, and many of the actors were very expert. A band of music was playing on a platform near the entrance. I was much amused at some small boys who were trying to steal in under the canvas. They had succeeded in getting about half-way under when one of the men connected with the circus observed them, and creeping softly up behind them, with a whip in his hand, he laid it over them so smartly that they were not long in scrambling back again to the outside of the tent.

We had been looking quietly at the performance for some minutes when a loud cry arose at the opposite side of the ring, where the wild beasts were kept. The greatest confusion followed. People from that side of the circus came rushing past us with pale and frightened faces.

I inquired of one after the other what was the matter; but so great was their fright that they hurried by without answering. At last I could distinguish cries of "The lion is loose! the lion is loose!"

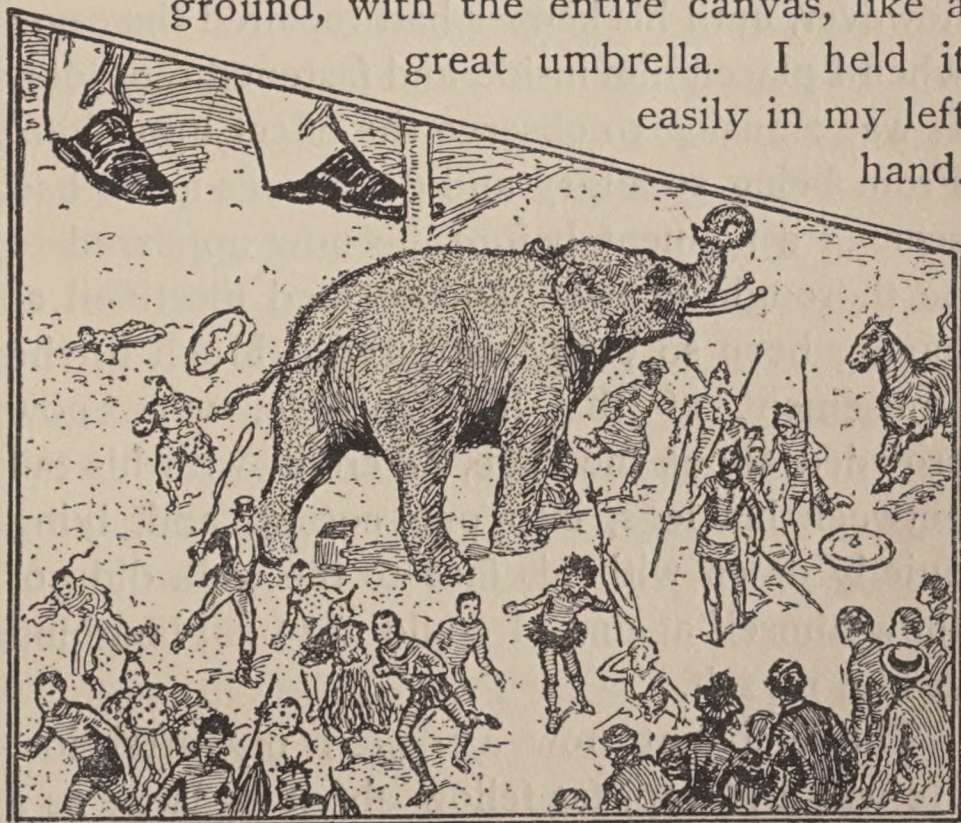


The King, who had started to his feet upon hearing this cry, became greatly alarmed.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, my wife and baby are here somewhere; help me to find them!"

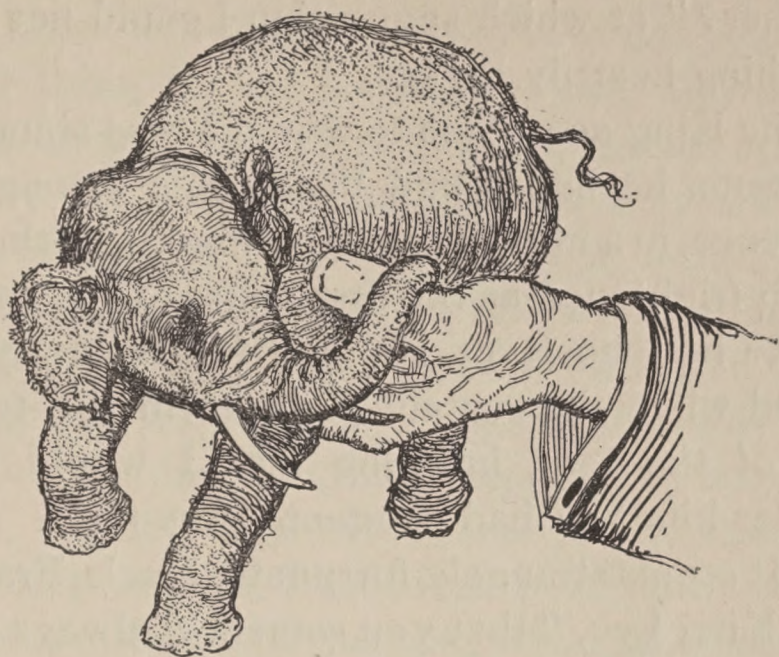
I thought of my powders. "I will first find the lion, my dear Leo, as the quickest way of protecting them"—and I swallowed a powder.

I rose rapidly to the top of the tent, and, finding it too low for my great height, took hold of the central pole, raising it off the ground, with the entire canvas, like a great umbrella. I held it easily in my left hand.



I then laid it carefully upon the ground while I looked about for the lion. It was not difficult to find him, for he was now roaring with all his might. I discovered him just in time; for he had, with one blow of his great paw, struck down a man, and was standing over him with one foot upon his breast, looking from one side to the other, while his tail lashed his sides in his fury. I caught him quickly by the back of his neck between my thumb and forefinger, very much to the relief of the man, who, fortunately, was not injured, and who was, you may be sure, very grateful to me for saving his life. The lion was a splendid little fellow, very savage, with a black mane, and exceedingly strong for so small a creature. I held him without difficulty, however, until his keeper had repaired the cage, when I placed him inside and fastened the door. It was amusing to observe the effect upon him. From being so angry and dangerous as he had seemed a moment before, he now appeared to be thoroughly cowed, and seemed mortified at having been so easily captured. Much to the amusement of the little people, who now crowded about the cage, he crept, with his tail between his legs, into one corner, and, lying quietly down with his face to the wall, did not show himself again. I could not help laughing at him myself.

The elephant now attracted my attention. He was a plump, fat fellow about as large as a



young pig. Much to the surprise of the little people, I picked him up easily by placing one hand under his stomach. All of his efforts to get away were useless, though he moved his chubby legs awkwardly and fairly snorted his displeasure, until, twining his trunk about one of my fingers, he commenced to tug at it with so much strength that I began to fear he would actually pull it out of joint. I was forced to put him down again, and spank him soundly, before he would let go. This performance greatly amused the small boys standing about. I thought they would laugh their little heads off. Some of them, in their merriment, rolled over and over on the sawdust, while one diminutive newsboy, taking his position in front of the elephant, said, "Aha! old fellow, how do you like that? Did n't that remind you of your

mother?" at which suggestion I could not help laughing heartily myself.

The King now came to where I was standing. It seems he had found the Queen among the audience, in a nervous state of mind. Although much frightened at the first alarm of the escape of the lion, however, she had felt instantly relieved when she saw my huge form rise to the top of the tent, knowing that I would soon master him as I had conquered the tiger.

"It seems strangely fortunate, Uncle Frank," said King Leo, "that you somehow always happen to be at hand when we most need you."

It certainly did seem somewhat strange that whenever of late they had been exposed to peril I had opportunely appeared to save them from danger.

I was now quite interested in examining the other animals of the menagerie, and especially the smaller ones. The monkeys particularly amused me greatly with their tricks and comical little faces. After seeing all there was of interest in the collection, including the tiger, which was regarded by everybody as a great curiosity, I was about leaving with King Leo and the Queen when the manager of the circus came to where I was standing, and desired to speak with me. I reached down carefully, and lifted him up to a level with my face, so that he could talk more easily to me. He then said he hoped I would be good enough to raise the tent again

for him. He suggested that it would be a very easy thing for me to do, and that they would then be able to keep their engagements according to the handbills, and give an entertainment that evening. He urged that it would be a serious disappointment to the people if he was prevented from doing so, as well as a great pecuniary loss to him. I good-naturedly consented to help him, and stepping to the tent-pole, I lifted it easily to its place; then, by standing outside, I held it in position by reaching over the top of the tent, while they fastened the cords below. The manager was profuse in his thanks, and his little troupe assembled to give me three cheers.

I now took a swallow from my bottle in order to grow small, and, in company with the King, started for his palace, the Queen having already preceded us in her carriage. We had not gone far before we met crowds of people hurrying from the city toward the circus to learn more about the escape of the lion. Many of them were anxious parents who had children, in charge of nurses, at the show, and were naturally alarmed. Indeed, the most extravagant reports had been circulated by mischievous persons, to the effect that many lives had been lost. We quieted their fears, and they seemed greatly relieved. We had not gone more than a few steps farther before we met some newsboys calling out "extras" of their little newspapers.

“Here you air—extree!” shouted one little ragged fellow, running toward us. “Escape of the wild beasts at the circus! Great loss of life!!”

“This is too bad,” said King Leo. “Here, boy; how many papers have you?”

The boy told him.

“Well, I will buy them all of you.”

And he actually paid for the whole lot rather than have any more of them sold to frighten people. I thought it very



generous of him to pay the boy for them, when, as King, he clearly had the right to forbid his selling them.

"That would be punishing the boy, who is not to blame," said he. "But I will step into the printing-office, and give the publishers a piece of my mind, when I have spare time.

"Some of our newspaper editors," he continued, "seem to have no principle whatever. They do not hesitate to publish the most improbable and sensational reports in order to sell a few papers. When I use my authority in the matter, they rant and rail about such nonsense as the 'liberty of the press,' until I feel like kicking them."

By this time we had reached the palace, and found the Queen at the door waiting for us. She insisted on my staying to dinner. As I was quite hungry, I consented to do so. I found it a most enjoyable meal, and elegantly served. After dinner the Queen asked to be excused while she looked after her baby, and King Leo invited me to his library. Here I spent the afternoon very pleasantly and profitably, listening to his wise plans for improving his kingdom.

At last the hour approached for me to start for home with the invisible net. King Leo called the Queen, who came with her beautiful baby to take leave of me. After kissing the baby—it was as sweet as a rosebud—and prom-

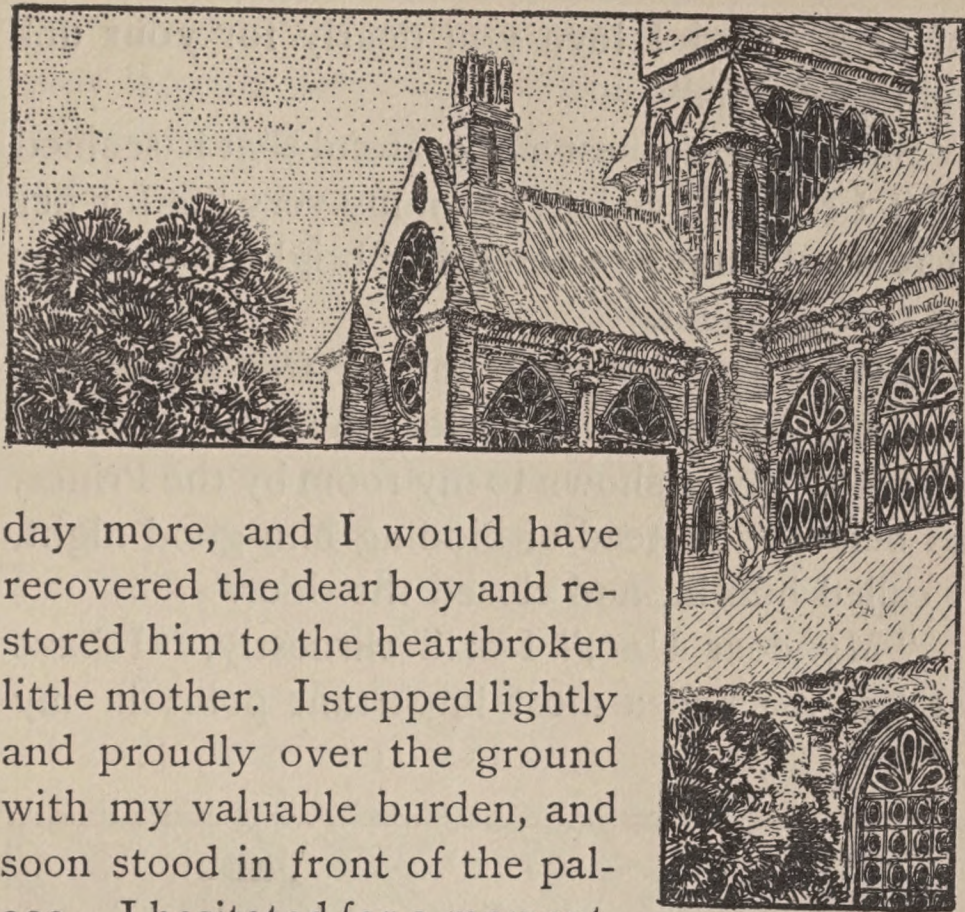


ising to come soon again to pay them a visit, I set out for the mill in company with King Leo.

I was surprised to find that the net was so light that even in my present small size I could lift it easily. After I had made myself large, I placed it carefully on my shoulder, and could scarcely feel its weight. It was very large, however, and formed quite a bundle on my great shoulder.

I now bade the King good-by, with many thanks for his attention to the matter, and started on my way for Prince Uno's palace.

And now my work seemed nearly done. One



day more, and I would have recovered the dear boy and restored him to the heartbroken little mother. I stepped lightly and proudly over the ground with my valuable burden, and soon stood in front of the palace. I hesitated for a moment, wondering what to do with the net, when my eye rested on the roof of the palace itself. It seemed a convenient and safe place for the net, and lifting it carefully from my shoulder, I deposited it there. I now made myself small, and entered the palace. Prince Uno and his wife were overjoyed to see me. The Princess looked anxiously at me, as if inquiring if I had news, good or bad, for her.

“Not quite yet, my lovely Ino, not quite yet!” I said gaily; “but hopes are brightening, and I am very near the end.”

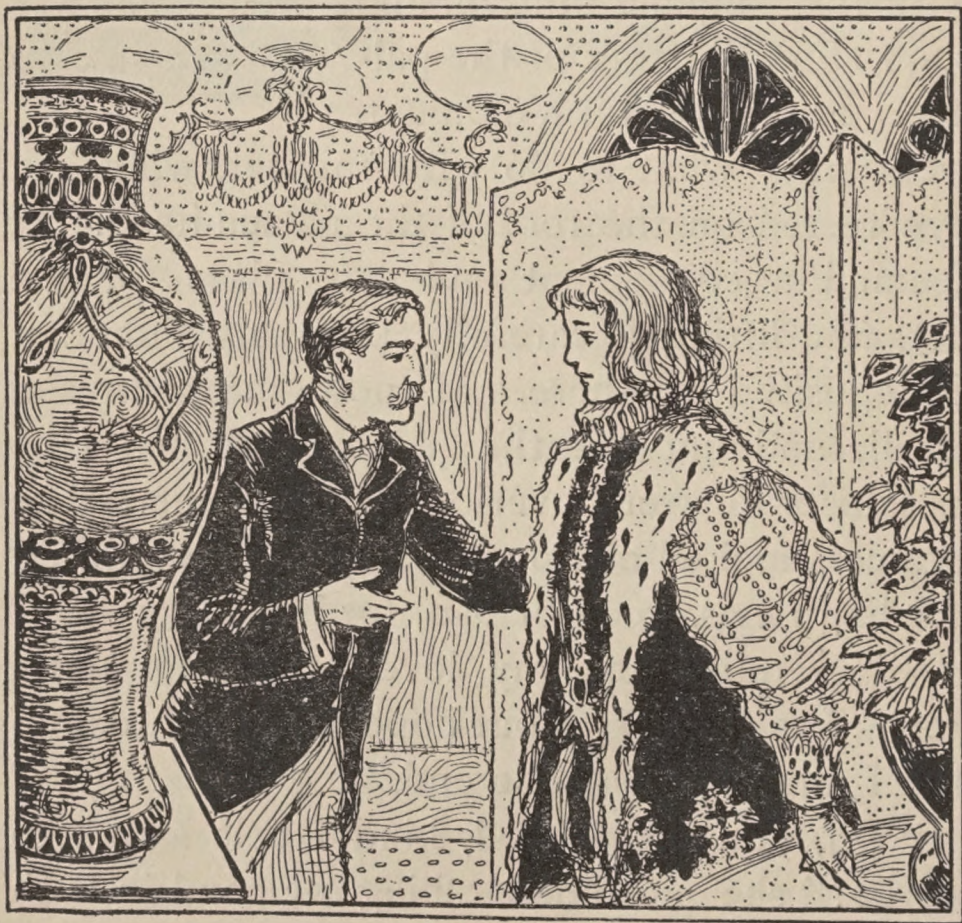
“Oh, you are a good, kind Uncle Frank to say so!” she exclaimed, taking my hand in both

of hers, "and I love you dearly for your unselfish efforts."

She was so earnest and grateful that it seemed as if I could have laid down my very life for her if it would have restored her bright boy to her at that moment.

We all had tea together. After a pleasant evening spent in the parlor, the time to retire arrived. I was shown to my room by the Prince, as before. Instead of bidding him good night, I called him in, and closed the door.

"My dear Uno," I said earnestly, "I have at last reached a most important point in my



plans, and by to-morrow night expect to have your boy or never to see you again. Everything depends on the next twenty-four hours, and I need your assistance."

"Oh, need I say that I am all yours, dear Uncle Frank?" he exclaimed earnestly.

I continued: "Upon the roof of this palace, just above the room in which we are now standing, is a large net which is invisible. Everything depends upon my having that net to-morrow. To-night, when you move me, it must be taken to my room, so that I can have it in the morning. Be very sure that it is carefully handled."

"Rely upon me," said he; "you shall find it in your room in the morning. But oh, can I not go with you? Think carefully before you decide, Uncle Frank. Remember, I may be able to assist you."

"No," I answered; "I do not wish any help."

While I felt that he would be of great assistance to me, the pride I felt in accomplishing my task all alone was so great that I decided to decline his help.

"Do not be too sure of not needing me, my dear friend," he said earnestly. "You do not know my power. At any rate, promise me," said he, seeing the resolution in my face, "that you will call me with the horn I gave you if you do need me."

"I promise," said I, "faithfully. In the meantime be hopeful, my dear Uno, for I now feel

very sure you will see your long-lost boy by to-morrow night."

"Oh, may it only prove true!" he exclaimed. "I cannot stand this terrible strain much longer."

I held out my hand to him. "I must say good night, dear Prince. Do not, for your life, forget the net."

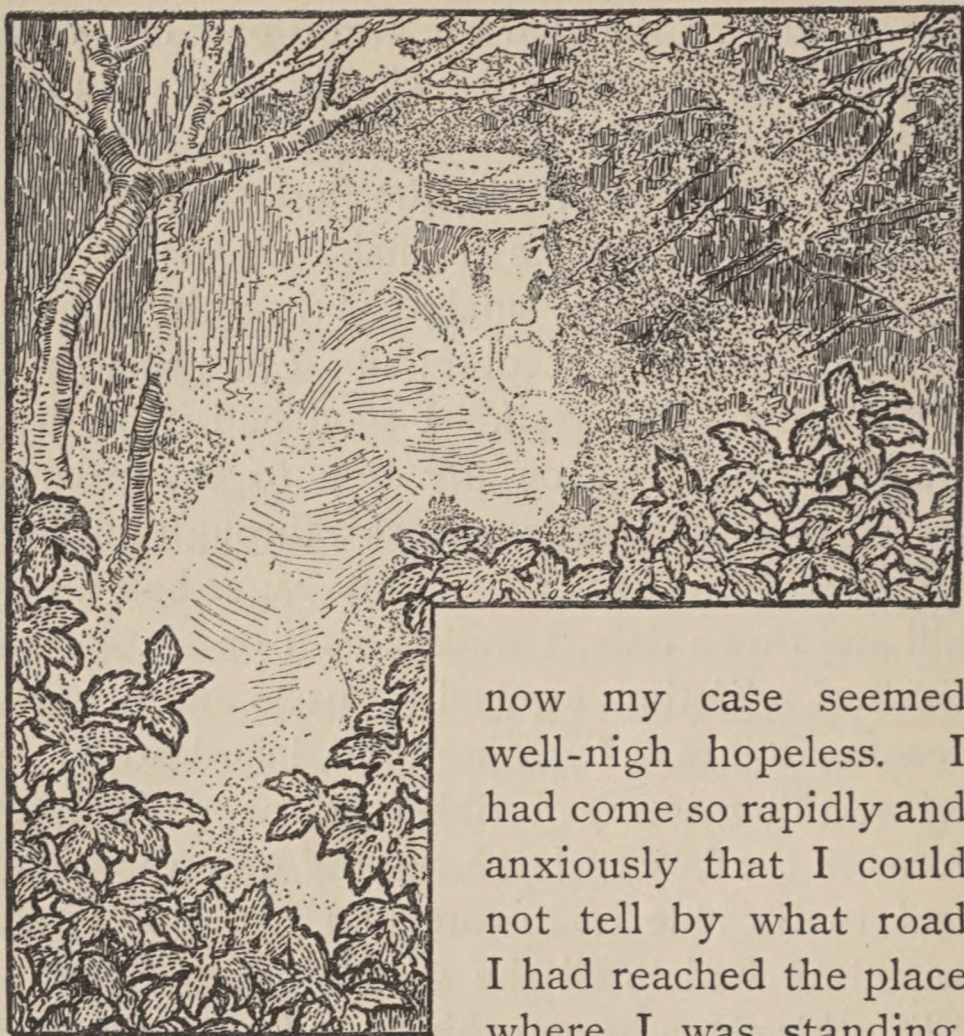
"Oh, do not fear it," he answered. "How could I forget it?"

He closed the door and was gone. I had some misgivings as to the wisdom of dispensing with his powerful aid in so important a task as was now before me, but my pride was too great for me to ask his assistance. I soon got into the little bed, and was sound asleep probably before many minutes had passed.

As before, I was moved in my sleep, and woke in the morning in my own room at home. So great was my anxiety for the safety of the net that I could do nothing until I had searched for it by feeling about the room; for I could not, of course, see it. It was some time before I found it—not until I had spent fully half an hour in the search, and grown very much worried. Then I at last stumbled headlong over it. The Prince, in his anxiety, had left it in a heap in the very middle of the floor, for fear I might not discover it, whereas I had been feeling around the sides of the room for it.

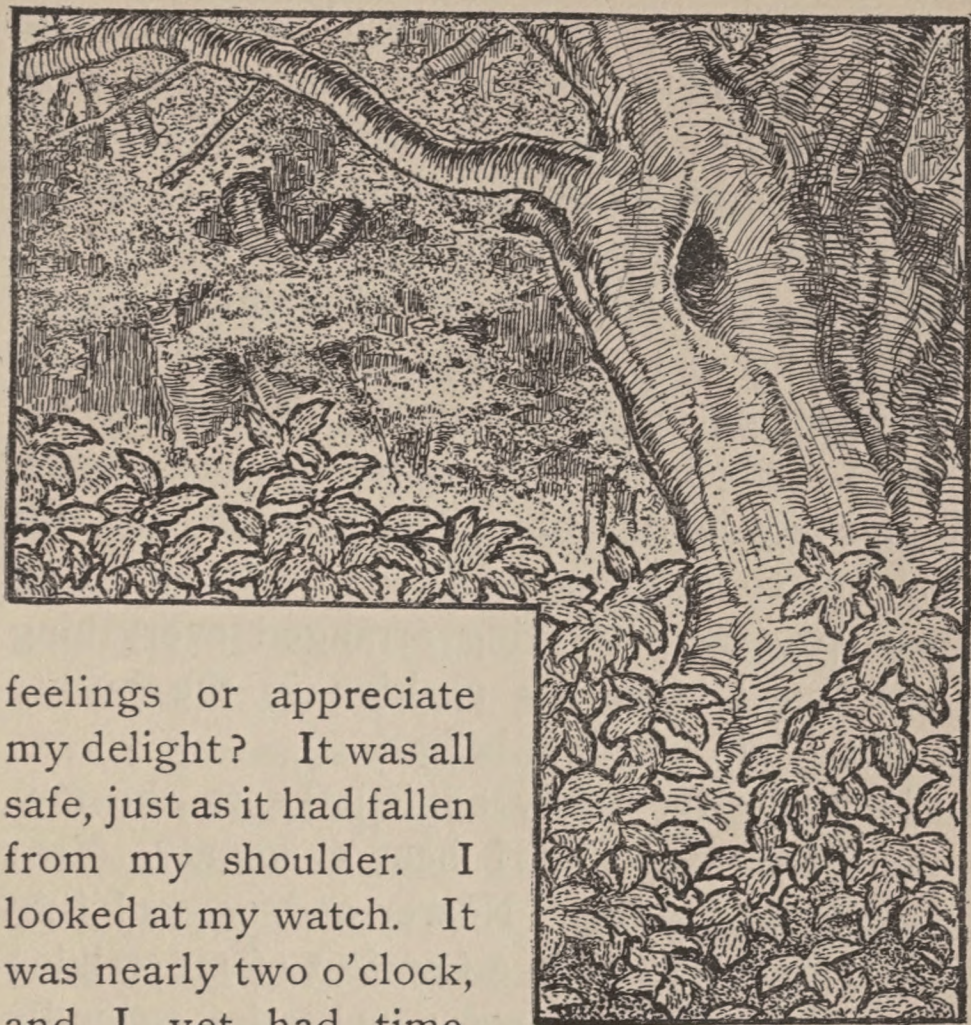
I dressed with feverish haste, and could eat no breakfast, so great was my desire to reach

the woods. I buckled the sword of King Vim to my side. I examined closely to see that I had all of my valuables—the powder to make the Wood-sprites visible, the flask to make me invisible, the powders to make me large, the bottle to make me small, the beautiful pearl horn, and the fairy scepter; all—I had them all. Now for the net itself. I soon had it on my shoulder and was on my way to the prison tree. Over the logs and rocks, through bushes which scratched my face in my eager haste, up hill and down dale, I walked as if on air. The work of a lifetime seemed about to end in success or failure. I saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing, in my terrible anxiety. Was I to recover the boy at last? was my only thought, and to be able to restore him to the dearest friends I had in all the world my only hope. With this thought and this hope I walked miles without fatigue, and was at last in sight of the prison tree. Now to go softly, and carefully spread the net! To spread the net? It was gone! I had lost it! I stood still in the agony of that terrible discovery, and could not move. My heart almost ceased to beat. I had lost the net—the invisible net on which everything depended! In my haste and anxiety it had fallen from my shoulder without my noticing it. There was no time to lose; in my very despair I realized and felt this, and that I must immediately retrace my steps and try to find it. And



now my case seemed well-nigh hopeless. I had come so rapidly and anxiously that I could not tell by what road I had reached the place where I was standing.

But danger sharpens one's wits. I examined the leaves to see where my feet had pressed them, the moss upon the stones to see where I had crushed it; and so for weary miles I patiently retraced my way, feeling carefully with my hands for the lost net. Patience is seldom without its reward. Just as I was about to give up the search as a hopeless one, and just as I had resolved to try to catch the Sprites without the net,—knowing that I must be at the tree by four o'clock or it would be too late,—I found it! Who can imagine my



feelings or appreciate my delight? It was all safe, just as it had fallen from my shoulder. I looked at my watch. It was nearly two o'clock, and I yet had time. Placing the net once more upon my shoulder, I started for the tree, this time without a thought but for its safety. At last I came again within sight of the tree, and, putting down the net, I drew out the little flask to make me invisible. Never had its delightful perfume smelled so sweet. I screwed the top carefully on, and replaced it in my pocket. For the last time I felt for the bottle, the powders, the fairy scepter, and the horn. They were all safe. Picking up the net once more, I set out for the tree. None but fairy eyes, I am sure,

could now have seen the invisible net on the shoulder of an invisible man creeping cautiously and noiselessly through the woods to the prison tree. Could it be possible that I was at last at the place? All was quiet, and it lacked a full half-hour to four o'clock. I commenced to arrange my net. I spread it carefully around the tree, leaving only a small opening at the path by which the Wood-sprites would come. I adjusted the ropes by which I could close this opening so soon as I felt sure of their being inside the net. Having arranged everything carefully, I took my position in the bushes where I had watched before.

How slowly, to my anxious heart, the moments passed! Did I hear a sound? Yes; they were coming! Nearer and nearer! At last they were within a few feet of me, talking earnestly. My heart was now beating so loudly that it seemed as if they must hear it and discover my presence; in my excitement, I actually tried to hold it quiet with my hand. They were passing me now, and were within the circle of the net and on their way into the tree. I cautiously pulled the cords to close the opening of the net, and knew that when they should come out with the boy I should have them safe. I had not long to wait.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, is that you? Oh, help me, or I am lost!"

I looked quickly at the opening of the tree,

and saw the beautiful boy struggling to escape from invisible hands. I had forgotten that I should be visible to his bright fairy eyes; and quickly putting my finger to my lips as a signal for him to be quiet, I drew the net tightly together, and had all three, the two Wood-sprites and the fairy boy, secure.

Now for the powder! I sprinkled it on the place where they were, and in an instant could see the two Sprites plainly. They were ugly-looking fellows. Unfortunately, in my haste, however, I had spilled some of the powder on myself, and I, too, was now visible. The Wood-sprites saw their danger. One of them placed something quickly to his mouth, and blew a shrill whistle which sounded far and wide through the woods. In an instant I was struggling with a hundred unseen hands, and the Wood-sprites were free! I had forgotten—what I ought to have remembered—that the Wood-sprites were almost as many in number as the Fairies themselves.

“Seize the Prince’s horn! Take the horn away from him!” shouted the Sprite.

It was their Chief I had caught in my net, and before I could grasp the fairy horn it was gone. Oh, if I had only consented to let the Prince accompany me! Why had I been so foolish?

“Ha, ha, ha!” laughed the Wood-sprite Chieftain at my discomfiture. “Bind him tight!”

I felt that I was being tied, but I seized the sword of King Vim, and in one movement of its bright blade cut every cord. I was free once more.

"Rust his sword!" shouted the Sprite.

They had strange power, for the beautiful sword of King Vim almost fell to pieces in my hand and was utterly useless. Again a hundred unseen hands pulled me down.

"The bottle!" shouted the Wood-sprite. "Empty it down his throat and make him small. We will put both him and the boy in the prison tree, and keep them there!"

The little boy seemed to lose all heart now.

"Oh, Uncle Frank, why did you lose the fairy horn?" he exclaimed. "One note on that would have brought my father, their King and master!"

I made one last desperate but hopeless effort to get free. In the struggle something fell from my bosom, and shone brightly in the sunlight. It was the royal scepter. Alas! I had forgotten all about that too until now, when it was too late to avail myself of its power. But no; the fairy boy had seen and recognized it when it fell. With one spring he reached it, and in an instant it was flashing in his hand. What a change came over him in that one short moment! I saw before me no longer a frightened, trembling child, but the proud front and face of the King of the Fairies, of Beast and Bird, of

Fish and Insect, of Wood-nymph and Wood-sprite!

How grand and beautiful he looked! His smile was full of courage now, and conscious power. And the Wood-sprites—where were they? With bowed head and bended knee, they were pleading for pardon at his feet. Everything was changed.

“I forgive all except your Chief and his brother, who have been so cruel to me. They must go before my royal father for judgment. Untie Uncle Frank this instant.”

A hundred trembling hands untied the cords which bound me, and helped me to rise. It seemed like a dream. I had come to save the fairy boy, and he had saved me. He turned to the Wood-sprites.

“Use the same cords to bind your Chief and his cruel brother!”

In an instant it was done.

“Now go to your homes. A better chief will be appointed to rule over you.”

I could hear their departure, like the rustling of many leaves, growing fainter and fainter in the distance, until I knew that there was no longer any one near us but the two prisoners.

“Walk on before us!” said the Prince, sternly, to them. “This day you appear before the High Court of Fairyland to answer for your treason!”



With pale faces and trembling limbs they obeyed him.

I whispered to the proud boy, "Oh, be careful not to lose your hold of the scepter, my dear Prince!"

He smiled pleasantly. "There is no longer any danger, Uncle Frank; having once touched it, I am now their King. It would make no difference now even if I should lose it, if that were possible. But how can I repay you for your patient search for me? I have seen you every day; and oh, it made my poor heart lighter to know that you were looking for me and had found the tree! You are surprised that I know you; but I have seen you many times in your own house at home before I was stolen, and I saw you every day through the bark of the tree in which I was imprisoned. Oh, you have been so faithful!"

"And so foolish," I replied.

"You did your best, and did it well," he said. "But how did you leave my beautiful mother?"

"Very anxious about her boy," I answered.

"I warrant it," he said gaily. "We must be careful how we break the news to her. You must help me, Uncle Frank."

"I have been worrying about that same task for some time," I answered. "We must be very careful how we manage it."

"First of all," said he, smiling, "you must curl my hair."

"Curl your hair!" I exclaimed. "I can never curl your hair."

"Oh, yes, you can, if I show you how. You have only to brush it over your finger as mother does."

I looked at his tiny head, and held out one of my immense fingers.

He laughed heartily. "Why, you might as well try to curl it over a log!" he exclaimed. "You must have something smaller than that."

He was a witty little chap, and had won my heart already with his pleasant ways and merry speeches.

"I have it!" I answered. I cut a round twig, about the size of a match, from a bush near us.

"Yes, that will do," said he. "Now for a brush."

We were standing near a mullen-stock. I quietly cut a narrow slip from one of its velvety leaves, and fastened it around a small stick with the plush side out. It made for the purpose an admirable brush. Sitting down upon a log, and with the Prince standing upon my knee, I now carefully brushed the beautiful curls over the twig, until they looked almost as handsome as when I had seen them in the picture.

"Now for a looking-glass," I said, "in which to see yourself."

"I can see myself in your eye," said he, "if you bend your head."

I laughed at the idea, and bent my head as requested.

"Yes, that will do," said he, critically. "Now for home. I will ride on your shoulder."

He floated easily, apparently without effort, to my shoulder. Preceded by the two Woodsprites, we set out for Fairyland. We were not long in reaching the great stone cover to the staircase. I was about to lift it as usual, when, to my surprise, the little Prince gently waved the scepter over it, and it opened slowly of its own accord, showing the steps below.



"Why, you are stronger than your royal father!" I exclaimed.

"How so?" he asked.

"Why, I always had to lift the stone for him."

"And did you suppose he could not open it for himself?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly I did," I answered. "He told me to open it."

He laughed long and merrily.

"Well, I must say you are smart, Uncle

Frank. How did you suppose he got into Fairy-land when you were not with him to give him your precious help?"

"Sure enough," said I. "I did not think of that. How could I have been so stupid!"

"Well, well," said the little fellow, evidently much amused; "father has been playing his jokes upon you, my dear Uncle Frank, and has been enjoying it, I warrant. I must help you to pay him back, and take your part now that you have taken mine."

He turned to the two Wood-sprites. "You must go down first," he said sternly, and with great dignity.

They came immediately to the staircase and stepped down before us. At the bottom of the steps we saw several fairies. The Prince called them to him, and gave the Wood-sprites into their charge. "Keep them in close confinement until I send for them," said he.

The fairies seemed overjoyed at finding their little Prince restored to them. They obeyed him without question, and hustled the rascally Wood-sprites off without ceremony.

"And now to meet mother! You must carry me in your pocket, Uncle Frank, while you break the news gently to her."

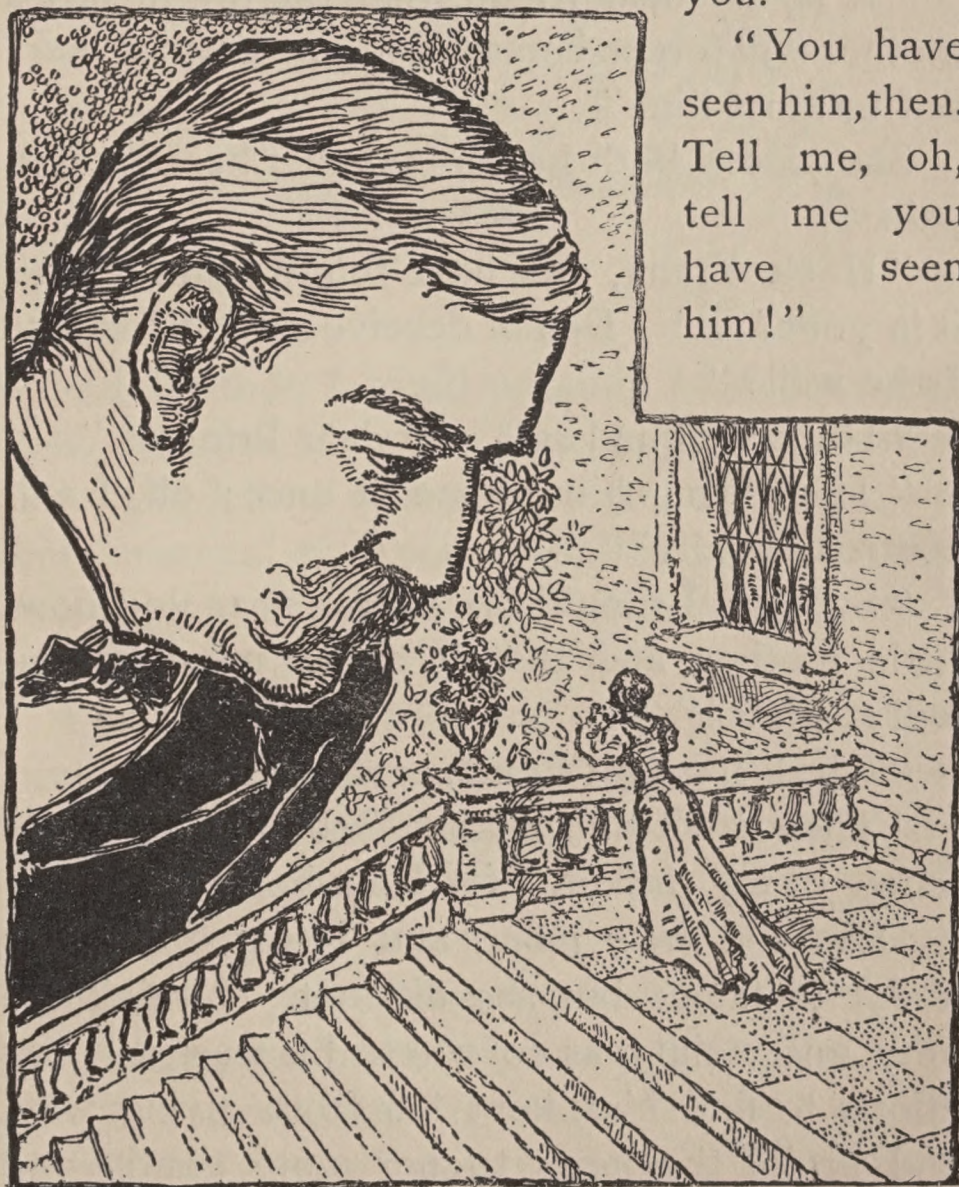
It was a good suggestion. I placed him in my great coat pocket, and started at once for the palace, anxious and worried as to how I should perform so difficult a task. The beauti-

ful little mother was on the palace steps waiting to hear any news I might bring. I took a seat upon the ground at the foot of the steps, in order to speak more easily with her.

"Oh, Uncle Frank!" she exclaimed. "Have you any news?"

"Yes, dear Princess, I am sure now of success. I have found out at last where your bright boy is, and I shall soon bring him to you."

"You have seen him, then. Tell me, oh, tell me you have seen him!"



"Yes, I have seen him, and so shall you very soon."

"I could kiss your dear, good face for that kind word, Uncle Frank," she exclaimed; "but oh, if you fail now, my heart will break!"

"I shall not fail—be sure of that, dear Princess. One thing only worries me."

"Tell me what it is!" she exclaimed anxiously.

"It is, my dear friend, that the bright boy's mother will forget herself, and not prepare herself to meet him."

She placed both hands upon her heart as if in pain.

"Uncle Frank, you have found him! I see it in your face! Do not deceive me any longer! Is he well?"

"He is well and safe, my dear Princess."

"Then bring him to me at once; oh, I will control myself!"

"Suppose I should say he was near you now, little mother, and that in a few minutes you will see him!"

"Oh, bring him to me, or I shall die!"

"Then don't die, mother," shouted the little fellow in my pocket, "for I am here!"

Her face grew paler, and I feared she was about to faint; but she did not. I think the very uncertainty as to where he was, and her efforts to find him, kept her from giving way, and broke the news to her more gently and



gradually than I could possibly have done myself. I soon liberated him, and in an instant the little fellow was pressed to her bosom, and her beautiful hair was mingling with his own fair curls. The lost was found, and my work was done!

I was very weak now, and felt my own strength giving way. It was Uncle Frank who was fainting—fainting from fatigue, from anxiety, and from happiness. I woke to find little people hurrying to and fro around me, to smell delightful and refreshing perfumes, and to hear my name pronounced by many little lips.

“Poor, dear Uncle Frank! We were so selfish as to forget all about him who has worked

so faithfully for us. Oh, forgive us, dear, kind Uncle Frank!"

"Did you faint, dear Princess?" I asked. "Try to control yourself; I have found your boy!"

A gentle kiss, and the falling of tears on my great rough cheek, were the only answer, but a most pleasant answer they were, for they told me of the gratitude of the happy little mother, and of a great and good work done.

Under careful attention I soon revived, and recognized Uno among those waiting on me. He had come while I was unconscious, and I had not seen the meeting between him and his boy.

"I cannot consent to your remaining so large, Uncle Frank," said he. "You must come down to where we can thank you."

He held the scepter in his hand, and gently touched my shoulder with it. He did not need the little bottle, then, after all!

I can tell but little more: how we entered the palace; how royally I was treated, its most honored and welcome guest; how King Leo's carriage drew up before the palace, and how he and his beautiful Queen joined in doing me honor; how the little boy Prince could not leave my side during all my stay, and seemed happiest when on my knee; how the Wood-sprites were tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, but forgiven by their kind though injured Prince, who, however, appointed a new and better chief

to rule over the Wood-sprites; and how, at last, I rose to leave the happy family circle I loved so well, to remember, as I was about to start, that I must wait until night, though I wished to reach home before.

Prince Uno saw the wish in my face, and taking the beautiful scepter from his bosom, he placed it in my hand.

"The royal scepter is yours, Uncle Frank. I could give you no more valuable gift. It will not make you King of the Fairies—no mortal could be that; but to come and go through Fairyland when and how you wish, by night or by day; to be visible or invisible, large or small, at will; to command the willing service of all the fairies, and of their grateful Prince himself"—and he bowed low before me—"all this I may and do give you with this fairy scepter!"

I could say nothing in reply. My heart was too full for speech. I stood in silence and with bowed head before him. A little hand slipped confidingly in mine. It was that of the beautiful boy.

"And to come often to Fairyland and see me is to be your bounden duty, Uncle Frank!"

I caught him up in my arms and kissed his smiling face. "It shall be a most pleasant duty, little Prince!" I replied. "And now good-by."

"Not good-by, but good night, dear Uncle Frank. You will come to-morrow."

"Yes, to-morrow and many to-morrows."

The pleasant partings were soon over, and I left Fairyland. I looked back, when at the great staircase, to see fair hands waving to me from the palace steps, and one, the smallest of them all, threw me a kiss. I waved mine in return.

“Good night, bright boy, good night!”



There is little more to tell.

To-day I wear upon my watch-chain two beautiful charms. One is a little horn of pearl, the other a golden scepter whose brilliant diamond is admired by all who see it. Those who look at them see only two beautiful charms, and little dream that one soft note upon that horn of pearl would summon to my side the most powerful Prince in all the world, or that by the scepter's magic power I can enter Fairyland by day or by night, become invisible or visible, large or small, at will ; and command, in case of need, the willing service and instant help of all the fairies in the world!

But the pleasantest is yet to tell.

Often when I seem alone I have most charming company, for a bright-eyed fairy boy loves well to come and sit with me, and gossip, by the flitting hour, of life and things in Fairyland. He seems to love me very much ; but oh, no mortal knows how more than dear he is to me!



*“ But, bark ! from tower on tree-top high,  
The sentry-elf his call has made;  
A streak is in the eastern sky,  
Shapes of moonlight flit and fade !  
The hill-tops gleam in morning's spring,  
The skylark shakes his dappled wing,  
The day-glimpse glimmers on the lawn,  
The cock has crowed, and the Fays are gone.”*

THE CULPRIT FAY.









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